

1036

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
EFFECTS OF RELIGION  
ON  
M A N K I N D;  
IN COUNTRIES, ANCIENT AND MODERN,  
BARBAROUS AND CIVILIZED.

CONTAINING,

- Sect. I. The Expediency of true Religion in civilized States, with the  
Origin and Effects of Pagan Superstitions.  
Sect. II. The Effects of Judaism on the Hebrews themselves, and on  
the Sentiments of Pagans.  
Sect. III. Tendency and real Effects of the Christian Code.  
Sect. IV. Origin, Progress, and Effects of Mahometanism.

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By the Rev. EDWARD RYAN, B.D.

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MAUD SCIO, AN PIETATE ADVERSUS DEOS SUBLATA, FIDES ETIAM,  
ET SOCIETAS HUMANI GENERIS, ET UNA EXCELLENTISSIMA  
VIRTUS, JUSTITIA TOLLATUR.

Tully de Nat. Deor. Lib. I. Cap. ij.

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M DCC LXXXVIII.

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TO THE

Right Rev. ROBERT FOWLER, D.D.

Lord Archbishop of DUBLIN.

MY LORD,

TO whom could this work be so properly dedicated as to the friend and protector of its author? Accept it then, my Lord, as the offering of respect, esteem, and gratitude. It is the only return I can make, for the many favours and marks of attention with which I have been honoured by your grace; favours not a little enhanced by the free and generous manner in which they were conferred. Exclusive of these considerations, the rectitude with which you, my Lord, discharge the duties of archbishop, should in itself be a sufficient inducement to submit this work to your grace's protection; nor can I doubt the patronage of him, whose conduct has ever evinced the sincerest wishes for the advancement of religion. You, my Lord, have at all times displayed a desire of distinguishing merit, by your approbation and protection;

tection; and have laudably encouraged your clergy to the faithful discharge of their duty, by various marks of attention and regard. Were I skilled in panegyric, I could point out many virtues in your grace's private character of husband, father, friend, &c. &c. but the virtues which you so eminently practise in your public station, more peculiarly demand a public acknowledgment; which cannot, in justice, be withheld by him, who has the honour to subscribe himself

Your Grace's most dutiful,

Most obliged,

And most devoted Servant,

EDWARD RYAN.

## P R E F A C E.

THE subject of this work originated from a question proposed, in the University of Dublin, by the Provost and Fellows in the year 1775, entitled "A Dissertation on the Influence of Religion on Civil Society." Four months were allowed for the disquisition; and a premium was offered to the author of the best dissertation. The right honourable John Hely Hutchinson, the Provost, has attended more than any of his predecessors, to this mode of encouraging literary compositions; and we have reason shortly to expect excellent works, from men who have been taught early to arrange their ideas, to write correctly, and to direct their studies to important subjects. The author's dissertation, on that question, was honoured with a premium by that learned Society; and, in the year 1780, he was encouraged, and prevailed on by the late Dr. Forefayth, who was eminent for erudition, to enlarge on the subject. The author often lamented

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that some of the most learned and ingenious Fellows of that University, did not undertake the task; and assures his readers, that if he had foreseen the difficulties which were to be encountered, and the degree of judgment and information which would be necessary in this disquisition, he would not have engaged in this work, from a despair of doing justice to so important an enquiry. Conscious that a treatise, which elucidates theology by history, will be more read than dry dissertations on religion and morality; the Author has blended theology with policy, and the doctrines of all religions with history, both ancient and modern, civil and ecclesiastical. In order to reduce this work to a moderate size, sentences short and deemed expressive, have been preferred to well turned periods; and those religious tenets are selected, which had an influence on policy and morals, on the condition of individuals, and the welfare of barbarous, as well as civilized states. By this selection many important questions are discussed in three octavos; the first of which exhibits the *effects* of *Natural, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan* religions. The next two volumes will,

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will, doubtless, be more interesting to many readers, as they contain the history of events less remote. This history, in some cases, detects, without controversy, false systems of religion; and shews that doctrines, which tend to the detriment of society, and have operated according to their tendency, could not have been dictated, by a wise and good God. On the contrary, the real and solid advantages, which have resulted from the Gospel; and the many evils which arose from breaches of its precepts, should attach men to it, and induce the enemies of religion to give it a fair hearing. Candidates for the clerical profession might derive much useful and necessary information from a treatise of this kind, which refers to some of the best authors on each subject; and comprises, within a narrow compass, the fruits of many years close study and research. Yet they who read for the purpose of censure will, doubtless, be gratified, in perusing this work; for though it is supported by history, and, in general, by arguments which cannot be controverted; “yet it is not armed at all points for battle, nor capable of standing the test of a captious controversy.” Can-

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did and learned readers will readily excuse trifling imperfections, in a work useful in its tendency, and extensive in its information; but severity is chiefly to be apprehended from men of superficial knowledge, who possess, or think they possess some taste in composition; while they want judgment, and information for a work of this nature. The author of this tract has pointed out errors, in writers far superior to him in understanding and knowledge; and must expect the same treatment, from some who are, perhaps, inferior to him in both these respects. But he has not animadverted on any writers, except those who held erroneous opinions, which clashed with his system; or who held tenets subversive of morality and detrimental to society. If he has, like other writers, maintained such doctrines; or voluntarily perverted the books which he consulted; he neither deserves, nor desires the indulgence of his readers. If Criticks should attack him, he has determined not to suffer an answer to interrupt the progress of his two succeeding volumes; but will postpone his defence to the conclusion of the Third. The Author could not conclude  
this

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this Preface, without expressing his acknowledgments to several men of learning, who have each read one or more Sections of this volume, and favoured him with their remarks. He is much indebted to Dr. Agar, Lord Archbishop of Cashel, for his judicious observations respecting the arrangement; and to Dr. Woodward, Lord Bishop of Cloyne, for perusing this entire volume, and suggesting many important ideas in the course of this treatise. He is also indebted to Dr. Bathurst, Canon of Christ Church, Oxford; and to Dr. Dobbin, Dr. Dabzac, Dr. J. Kearney, Dr. Young, Messrs. Barrat, Burrowes, Elrington, Graves, (Fellows of the University of Dublin) and other learned men, who have each read particular Sections of it, and honoured him with their observations.

C O N-

# C O N T E N T S.

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### EXPEDIENCY OF TRUE RELIGION TO CIVILIZED STATES, WITH THE ORIGIN AND EFFECTS OF PAGAN SUPERSTITIONS.

*The origin and establishment of civil society.—The expediency and defects of human laws.—Human sanctions imperfect.—Pagan legislators employed religion to remedy the defects of human laws.—Tendency of natural religion to prevent crimes and enforce oaths.—Its tendency with respect to judges and witnesses, princes and their subjects.—Source of religious knowledge among some ancient nations.—Effects of that religion, usually called natural, on the ancient Chinese.—Effects of it on the ancient Persians.—Effects of it on the ancient Indians.—Question relative to the origin and effects of paganism.—Anubis and Sphinx, Egyptian symbols, not real beings.—Osiris and Neptune, symbols, not real beings.—Isis, Ceres, Diana, and Venus.—Mars, Hercules, Vulcan, Apollo, taken from Horus an Egyptian symbol.—Muses, Graces, Pallas, Pales taken from the figures of Isis.—Symbols and funeral ceremonies of the Egyptians the source of fables.—Fable of the Giants and Proserpine.—Mercury,*

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Maho-

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T H E

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
EFFECTS OF RELIGION  
ON  
M A N K I N D.

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SECT. I.

*Expediency of true Religion to civilized States, with  
the Origin and Effects of Pagan Superstitions.*

SOME moralists, enquiring into the origin and advantages of civil institutions, have exhibited a picture of a state of nature, which never existed, except in their own fertile imaginations. In this state, they have supposed a considerable number of men destitute of every just notion of property, maiming, murdering and plundering each other. These men, by exaggerated descriptions of the evils of this fantastic state, probably

SECT.  
I.

The origin  
and esta-  
blishment of  
civil society.

B intended

SECT. I. intended to compliment legislators and founders of states. But the hypothesis of these moralists is repugnant to reason, and to the most ancient account of the origin of mankind. The history of the Hebrew lawgiver assures us, that mankind sprung from a single pair, who must have kept their children subject to parental government, and inculcated both moral and social duties. As mankind multiplied, the ties of blood were gradually loosened, men's private interests were separated, and, as we may reasonably suppose, several small societies were formed independent of each other. But these societies, being respectively in the condition ascribed to individuals in a state of nature, must have been subject to the evils resulting from that state. Should any dispute arise between two families, or between two members of different families, we may guess the consequences: for want of a common judge, prejudice and self-love must render men obstinate, warp the judgment, and magnify offences to such a degree, that the contest naturally terminates in riot and bloodshed. To avoid these inconveniences, and to obtain all the advantages of a social state, individuals and tribes judged it expedient to unite in society. Before such union they enjoyed uncontrolled liberty, and were subject to no earthly jurisdiction but parental. However, as this liberty was uncertain in its duration, and liable to encroachments; it is reasonable to suppose, that men would

would cheerfully resign part of it; in order to <sup>SECT.</sup>  
preserve the remainder inviolate. This resigna-  
tion was made by the establishment of civil polity,  
which deprived man of his original independence,  
and of all right of avenging himself; and sub-  
jected him to such laws, as were enacted by gene-  
ral consent for the common interest. Nor was it  
difficult to prevail on men to associate together,  
and unite in societies. Their weakness, their  
wants, and the many evils, to which they were  
exposed, required it; while a propensity to pro-  
pagation and a love of their offspring made such  
societies desirable and useful. The Roman ora-  
tor (a) acquaints us, that even misanthropes seek  
for the society of men, to whom they might  
communicate their thoughts, and discharge their  
malice on the rest of mankind. The diversity of  
talents produced a reciprocal dependence amongst  
men, the faculty of speech, which is useless out  
of society, fitted them for it; a desire of praise  
prompted them to it (b); and all these circum-  
stances concur in proclaiming it to be the divine  
will, that men should enter into a social state;  
for, what reason and human necessities dictate, we  
may be fully persuaded is the divine will. A  
late ingenious writer maintains, that man is a  
compound of unsocial affections as well as social;

(a) De Amicitia, cap. 23.  
on Government, Part II. c. 1.

(b) See Tucker's Treatise

**S E C T.** and that the former are as natural to man as the  
**I.** latter. That aversion to strangers makes a branch  
of our nature, exists among individuals in private  
life, flames high between neighbouring tribes, and  
is visible even in infancy. That savage nations  
who are gentle, just, good-natured and grateful to  
those of their own tribe are false and faithless to  
strangers and foreigners. "That Europeans, who  
visited some islands of the South-Sea, found the  
natives with arms in their hands, resolute to pre-  
vent their landing. That among the Koriacks,  
bordering on Kamscatka, murder within the tribe  
is severely punished; while the murder of a  
stranger is not minded." But, might not the  
aversion subsisting among neighbouring tribes be  
ascribed to quarrels, which are unavoidable, where  
property is undetermined, and no written laws to  
terminate disputes? It should not be considered  
as a proof of unsocial affections, that savages arm  
themselves to repel Europeans, who were gene-  
rally known to visit their coasts, not to gratify  
curiosity, but to disturb their tranquility and  
strip them of their possessions. Nor is it fair to  
judge of human nature from savages, who act  
more from example and self-defence, than from  
the refinements of reason. Had this writer pe-  
rused the works of the benevolent Cumberland,  
he could not have maintained, the malignant af-  
fections to be natural to man, without attempting  
to refute him; especially, as the argument from  
savages,

savages, who are as narrow in their affections, as in their education; cannot overthrow the reasonings of that prelate, which are founded on the nature of man and on his obligations to virtue. Even Lord Kaimes produces instances, in the same Sketch, of disinterested benevolence among nations and tribes, who possibly were strangers to the violence of invaders. This writer asserts, that "the inhabitants of some southern islands appear to have little or no aversion to strangers; and that among the Celtæ it was capital to kill a stranger, whereas the killing a citizen was but banishment (c)."

S E C T.  
I.

Both reason and respectable authorities (d) evince, that human laws were instituted to prevent injustice, to protect the weak, to restrain the turbulent, to encourage virtue, and to promote the peace and interest of society. If human laws do not uniformly produce those salutary effects, the original intention of entering into society is so far frustrated, as those laws are defective. But the following observations, borrowed chiefly from the writings of a learned bishop (e), fully prove that human laws are not sufficiently coercive, nor productive of all the advantages, which they were intended to produce. Human laws, being the compositions of weak, prejudiced or interested

Expediency  
and defects  
of human  
laws.

(c) Book II. Sketch 1.

(d) Hor. Lib. I. Sat. iii.

111. Tully de Leg. Lib. I. cap. 22. and Lib. II. cap. 5.

(e) Warburton's Divine Legation, Book I. sect. 2.

**S E C T. I.** men, are not always just, and when just, cannot provide against all disorders in a state: many grievances necessarily escaping the foresight of the wisest legislators. They are frequently ambiguous, equivocal and liable to misinterpretation, and the plainest and most simple are often wrested from their obvious meaning and intention. Political laws, ever attentive to the external actions of men, forbid only such enormities as are evidently pernicious to society, and plainly destructive of human happiness. They take no cognizance of trifling errors, which sometimes lead to, or terminate in, serious mischiefs: do not prohibit ingratitude, detraction, and a breach of promise; nor repress pride, avarice, ambition, envy, malice and revenge so destructive of the peace and welfare of society. There are several virtues, which the civil magistrate cannot enforce by penal laws; without considerable inconvenience. Were men constrained to hospitality, liberality, truth, beneficence, gratitude, sincerity and other duties, it must destroy the merit of those many virtues, the free exercise of which constitutes the good and amiable character. In a word human laws do not compel men to the practice of those virtues; a man may omit the duties of imperfect obligation, without dread of the civil magistrate; though they contribute to the happiness and ornament of society. Civil institutions cannot restrain such irregularities, as result from  
our

our natural appetites; and are so far from effect- S E C T.  
I.  
ing this important and desirable end, that civil  
polity rather inflames and quickens than controls  
the passions. In a laborious state of unimproved  
nature, mens wants are few, and their appetites  
moderate; while improved civil society creates  
artificial wants, and numberless contests arise from  
avarice and luxury. Upon the whole, it is evi-  
dent, that human laws, considered as a system of  
rules for the benefit of society, are not always  
just, universal, and determinate; do not restrain  
intemperance, regulate the thoughts, meliorate the  
heart nor promote the general practice of virtue.

The insufficiency of human laws will more fully  
appear, from a consideration of their sanctions. Human  
sanctions  
imperfect.  
So useful are rewards and punishments in enforcing  
obedience to laws, and so necessary for the sup-  
port of governments; that it has been a question  
among moralists, whether rewards or punishments  
are the most cogent motives to an observance of  
them. The controversy points out the necessity  
of uniting them; and we find that legislators in  
their speculative schemes have really done so.  
But that laws must be imperfect, with respect to  
rewards and punishments, will appear evident from  
the following observations. The civil magistrate  
cannot always clearly prove the crime against of-  
fenders, who frequently evade the law and escape  
its penalties. Should an offender even be con-  
victed, he still hopes for impunity from the lenity

**SECT.**  
**I.** } or corruption of the civil magistrate: and should he be punished, the penalty is frequently too severe for the offence. Were penal laws less severe, delinquents of the second class, such as thieves, robbers, &c. who often escape the punishment justly merited by their crimes, might be encouraged to the perpetration of offences, still more heinous and dangerous to society. For this reason capital punishments are wisely denounced, against such as are convicted; as the severity of punishments should more than balance the hope of impunity and the uncertainty of detection. As to the sanction of laws by rewards, it is obvious that it could not be established in any government; because, according to an eminent English lawyer (*f*), "were the exercise of every virtue to be enforced by the proposal of particular rewards, it would be impossible for any state, to furnish stock for so profuse a bounty." The payment of such rewards, by taxes levied on the people, would be impossible; no nation being able to bribe every member to an observance of its laws. Since then rewards and punishments are the basis of human laws, and "the very hinges upon which all government turns;" and since civil institutions are, in numberless instances, destitute of those supports; it is evident, that without some other prop, the fabric of human laws must, in some

(*f*) Blackstone's Commentaries, Introd. sect. 2.

degree, be unsupported, and so far fail of the S E C T. I.  
end which they propose.

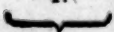
Having taken a cursory view of the defects of penal laws, it will be necessary to point out some remedy, for those defects and imperfections. History acquaints us, that founders of states have employed religion, as the most effectual means of supplying the defects of laws, and weakness of their authority. No regular government has ever been established without some form of religion; as if the former was defective without the latter, and the one was a necessary appendage to the other. Theseus (*g*) committed the care of religion and the interpretation of sacred matters to the nobility: Lycurgus (*h*) consulted Apollo, previous to his political institutions; and Solon (*i*), and the laws of the twelve tables, were not inattentive to religion. These and other lawgivers inculcated a notion of some superior beings, who were to influence men's actions, by the powerful motives of hope and fear. These men did not take a superficial view of human nature, like many ancient and modern unbelievers; but were acquainted with the tempers and capacities of mankind, from experience and intercourse with the world. The legislators of every state, conscious of their own insufficiency in conducting their political plans, and finding the minds of their sub-

Pagan legislators, assisted by their religion, endeavoured to remedy the defects of human laws.

(*g*) Plutarch's Lives.

(*h*) Ibid.

(*i*) Ibid.

**S E C T. I.** jects impressed with some ideas of religion, judged it expedient, to give the religious principle such a direction, as might advance their designs. For this purpose they established a mode of worship calculated to support the civil magistrate in his office, and to inspire a respect for laws, supposed to be dictated by some deity, whom the people were taught to reverence. In order to accomplish this end they pretended to an intercourse with some deity, from whom they professed to have received their laws and ordinances. The Egyptian legislators pretended to have received their laws from Amasis and Mnemes: Zoroaster the Bactrian from Vesta; the Cretans, Minos and Rhadamanthus from Jupiter; Lycurgus from Apollo; Romulus from Confus, and Numa from Egeria. To perpetuate those laws, and procure an unfeigned obedience to them, they kept this persuasion alive, by the pompous parade of rites and ceremonies, which never fail to have a powerful effect on the minds of the multitude. Games were celebrated, temples erected, solemn rites instituted in honour of those gods, under whose protection they affected to place their civil as well as religious rights, and to whom, as their guardians, they had recourse in all emergencies.

Tendency of  
natural reli-  
gion to pre-  
vent crimes.

Having pointed out the defects of human laws, and the means employed by legislators to rectify them; I shall in the course of this section consider the influence of those means on human kind,

and proceed immediately to shew, what effect true S E C T.  
I.  
religion is calculated to produce, on the morals  
of men in polished and barbarous states, and how  
it remedies the imperfections of civil establishments.  
By true religion I mean, a sense of the being and attributes of God, discovered by reason, revelation, tradition, or by all of them together. Refined ideas of the deity have been derived, with some probability, from ancient tradition; with certainty, from the Mosaic and prophetic writings; and obscurely, if at all, from the deductions of reason, as will appear in the second section. Those three kinds of religion, according as we judge them to be borrowed from reason, revelation and patriarchal religion, I call natural, revealed, and Noachian; and shall consider, in the course of this work, the tendency and effects of these, on the morals of individuals, and on the welfare of communities. It is evident, that a lively sense of the divine attributes, as understood by the patriarchs and prophets, and afterwards taught by the wisest and most ancient sages, must enforce morality and remedy the defects already pointed out in the laws of every country. The most important human laws are founded on natural; and denounce civil penalties, on crimes already prohibited by the laws of nature or of God. For this reason, though a criminal should escape here the punishment due to his offences; yet, if possessed of the religious principle, he cannot expect

**S E C T. I.** **fect** to escape the all-seeing eye of the Supreme Being whose justice requires him to punish offenders.

*Its tendency with respect to judges and witnesses, sovereigns and their subjects.*

The validity of oaths is founded on a sense of the omnipresence and justice of God; and the expediency of those solemn appeals will appear, from considering their influence upon judges and witnesses, upon sovereigns and their subjects. Civil laws being often ambiguous, sometimes obscure, and seldom universal; in all these cases, the decision depends much on the integrity of the judge, whose duty and oath require him to supply deficiencies, and elucidate obscurities, by a fair and simple interpretation; by an impartial application of laws to particular cases; and by attending to the original intention and spirit of the legislator. The veracity of witnesses, cited in courts of justice, also depends much upon their sentiments of religion: the more disinterested men are, the more credible; and none surely are more disinterested, than the truly religious; who consider a present unjust advantage as trifling and mean, compared with that, which is future and eternal. Hence it appears, that religion is a powerful preventive of corruption in judges, and the most effectual means, which the civil magistrate has ever devised, for the advancement of truth, in matters relative to life and property. Nor is religion less useful to princes and their subjects: what can add more weight to the authority of a

supreme

supreme magistrate, or more dignity to his office; SECT. I.  
than a full assurance of his piety and impartiality {  
in dispensing justice, and enforcing the laws?

“ So natural, says Hooker (*l*), is the union of religion with justice, that we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not.” The faithful execution of laws depends, in some measure, upon the sacred oath, whereby the prince is bound to administer them with equity, and to act according to the trust reposed in him by his people. A supreme magistrate might perhaps, by the dread of his power, compel his subjects to an observance of his laws; but without a conscientious concurrence of the will, no sincere obedience is to be expected. The religious principle tends to render sovereigns mild and just in their administration; and subjects loyal and obedient to their prince. “ Such is the force which religion hath, to qualify all sorts of men, and to render them in public affairs the more serviceable; governors the apter to rule with conscience, inferiors, for conscience sake, the more willing to obey (*m*).”

“ A prince who loves and fears religion, says Montesquieu (*n*), is a lion who stoops to the hand that strokes, or to the voice that appeases him; he, who fears and hates religion, is like the wild beast that growls and bites the chain which prevents his flying on the passenger: he, who has

(*l*) Eccl. Polity, Book V. Sect. I.

(*m*) Ibid,

(*n*) Spirit of Laws, Book XXIV, Chap. II.

**SECT.** no religion at all, is that terrible animal who  
 1. perceives his liberty only, when he tears to pieces  
 and devours." Since then religion is so useful  
 in states, where prince and people are directed by  
 standing laws; how much more useful must it be  
 in despotic governments, where the sovereign is  
 absolute; and where the people have no security  
 from oppression, but in the humanity of the  
 prince? What can so humanize the despot's heart,  
 or so effectually restrain him from exchanging his  
 scepter for an iron rod; as a strong sense of a  
 being, to whom he must account for his actions,  
 and who will reward or punish him according to  
 his works?

Source of  
 religious  
 knowledge  
 among some  
 ancient na-  
 tions.

If we take a view of the opinions entertained of  
 God, by some ancient nations, and examine their  
 effects; we shall find their ideas of the deity tole-  
 rably refined, and their moral practice such, as  
 might naturally be expected from a strict adhe-  
 rence to the precepts of true religion. It is uni-  
 versally acknowledged, that Ham, one of Noah's  
 sons, had settled in Egypt after the deluge. Be-  
 ing about one hundred years old, he was acquaint-  
 ed with religion, morality, agriculture and arts of  
 the antediluvian world; and well qualified to in-  
 struct his family, and descendants in the know-  
 ledge and practice of them. It is natural to sup-  
 pose, that Noah, the second father of mankind,  
 had impressed on the minds of his children, a  
 strong sense of the attributes of God and the ne-  
 cessity

cessity of morality. His escape, from the general sect.  
destruction, must have made him contemplate the I.  
goodness and forbearance of God, with pleasure  
and gratitude; and his power, wisdom and good-  
ness, with awe, wonder, and dread of offending.  
He must have told his family, that the antedilu-  
vian world was incorrigibly wicked, and destroy-  
ed, not only for the punishment of their crimes,  
but for an example to posterity. The pride of be-  
ing a favourite of heaven must have made this  
miraculous flood, the vices of mankind, and the  
attributes of God, his favourite theme and subject  
of conversation: so that his disciples must have  
been well instructed in religious and moral pre-  
cepts, and have conveyed each of them, the same  
instruction to his children and descendants. We  
are not sufficiently acquainted with the history of  
nations thus instructed, to point out accurately  
the influence of pure religion on the lives of in-  
dividuals and the state of society. But it is high-  
ly probable, that different nations observed dif-  
ferently the precepts of religion, and that some  
observed them strictly, while others degenerated  
into vice, superstition and idolatry. We find  
vestiges of Noachian or perhaps revealed religion  
among some ancient nations, and such morals as  
might be expected from men whose minds were  
impressed with true ideas of a deity.

It

S E C T.  
I.

Effects of  
that reli-  
gion, usual-  
ly called na-  
tural, on the  
ancient  
Chinese.

It appears from the testimony of Numenius (o), quoted by Eusebius, that the Bramins, Jews, Magi, and Egyptians, he might have also said the Chinese, had nearly the same notions of a Supreme Being. Nor is it improbable; since all sprung from the same stock, and the Noachian traditions were uncorrupted in all nations, for some time after the deluge. The primitive Chinese had refined ideas of the attributes of God; and worshipped him, under the title of Shangti or Tyen. They considered him as eternal, and always active, the sovereign emperor, intelligent; incomprehensible, omnipotent; the self-existent unity, which produced all things by his power, just, good and merciful; who rewards or punishes either here, or hereafter; whose justice is love, and whose punishments are mercies (p). This people continued a long time pure, in their religious system, and moral practice; most of their emperors were pious, learned, just and generous; and one of them was so exemplary in his manners, that he permitted his subjects, to write on a table, exposed to public view, any thing reprehensible in his conduct. As the religion of China lasted longer pure than in other countries; so they excelled other nations, in wisdom, virtue and duration of their monarchy (q). The Chinese, in pro-

(o) Ramsay's Philosophical Principles of Religion, Vol. II. Chap. I. (p) Ibid.

(q) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. III. folio, Introd. to Hist. of China.

ects of time, degenerated into superstition and <sup>SECT.</sup> vice, notwithstanding the endeavours of Confucius to restore the purity of the original worship. After the death of this reformer, the idolatry of Fo was spread over a considerable part of India, Tartary, and China; and the Chinese became false and fraudulent, whether from a decay of religion, or some other cause, I shall not pretend to determine.

According to the same author, extant in Eusebius's time, the Persian Magi considered the Supreme Being eternal, uncreated, incorruptible, incorporeal and uncompounded, the greatest and best of beings, creator of soul and body, of light and darkness, and prior to both (r). The Medes and Persians who were sprung from Shem, Noah's son, probably retained, for some time, the ancient patriarchial religion and customs without any considerable alteration. Zoroaster reformed the religion of the Persians from any corruptions that had crept into it, and might have been enabled to do so from his acquaintance with the Hebrews, during the Babylonish captivity, and from his knowledge of the Old Testament (s). The learned Hyde affirms, that the ancient Persians are the only nation upon earth, except the Jews and their ancestors, who retained from the deluge, to his own time, the knowledge and wor-

Effects of it  
on the an-  
cient Pers-  
ians.

(r) Ramsay's Philos. Principles of Religion, Vol. II. Chap. i.

(s) Hyde's Hist. Relig. Veterum Persarum, Cap. i. and xxii.

**S E C T. I.** ship of the true God ; with some slight mixtures of idolatry and superstition. They have been accused by Christians and Mahometans of ignorance of God, and the worship of fire ; Hyde, though he admits they paid great homage to this element, yet denies they prayed to it ; and maintains, that they always worshipped the true God with sincerity and ardour (*t*). The moral system and manners of Persians were such as might be expected from persons, who had formed true ideas of the divine attributes. Their Sadder (*v*), or sacred book, abounds with excellent moral precepts, blended indeed with false opinions ; and requires them to begin the day with prayer, praises and thanksgivings unto God ; to be chaste in their bodies, honest in their dealings, and to shun pleasure, pride, robbery, and revenge (*u*). This people were temperate in their festivals, grave and austere in their deportment ; it was deemed criminal in a plebeian to commit fornication, and even the monarch was not allowed to get drunk, more than once a year (*w*).

Effects of  
natural re-  
ligion on the  
ancient In-  
dians.

The ancient Indians held an opinion, that the governor of the world pervades it as a soul ; that he is immortal and bountiful, and knoweth, ruleth and preserveth all things ; that the human soul is a particle of the divine, survives the body, and re-

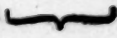
(*t*) Hyde, Cap. viii.

(*v*) Ibid. prope finem.

(*u*) Bruckeri Hist. Critica de Philosophia Persarum, Lib. II.

Cap. xv.

(*w*) Hyde, Cap. xxxiv.

turns to God to be rewarded or punished (x). SECT. I.  
From the Verdam, or Sacred Book of the Indians  it appears, that they believed in a supreme being, who protects all things by viceroys or inferior deities; is simple, invifible, immutable, eternal, wife, holy, true, good, juft and merciful (y). The morality of the Indians was fo sublime and pure, and had fuch a tendency to fubdue the paffions, and induce men to the practice of many virtues; that Brucker (z), from a partiality for the Greek philofophy, feems to fufpect; that the doctines afcribed to them, were borrowed from the Greek fchools and the precepts of the Gofpel. The Indian philofophy required men to extirpate evil defires and criminal indulgences, and to lead lives of innocence and austeriy. Their practice was, in general, conformable to their principles; the Indians were fo auftere, that fome fecluded themfelves from fociety, to fhun occafions of fin, and to practice virtue retired from the world. Others abftained from wine, and animal food, and performed feveral acts of patience and felf-denial; while fome defpifed even death, though adminiftered in torments. The ancient Bramins, or priefts, were remarkably rigid; and acquired great influence with prince and people, not only for

(x) Bruckeri de philofophia Indorum, Lib. II. Cap. iv. Sect. 6.

(y) Ramsfay, Ch. i. of God's Exiftence and Attributes.

(z) Bruckeri, Lib. II. Cap. iv. Sect. 4. and 7.

**S E C T. I.** **I.** their continence and hardiness; but for their skill in prophesy, and interceding with the Gods in time of public calamity. Being sent for by Alexander the Great, who had conquered their country; they treated him with contempt, disobeyed his summons, and desired he would come to them, if an interview was necessary (a). From what has been said it appears, that the ancient Chinese, Persians and Indians, who entertained sublime ideas of God though blended with false opinions, were virtuous in practice, and that some of them were moral, even to a degree of austerity. With respect to the Egyptians, we know little of their religion and morality, in the early ages of that nation: but we may judge from analogy, that they continued for some time religious and virtuous; and know to a certainty, that in the time of Moses they were actually sunk in superstition and vice.

Question relative to the origin and effects of Paganism.

Having marked the tendency of true religion, and its salutary effects in some ancient kingdoms; I proceed to point out the mischiefs that have arisen, from ignorance or corruptions of the precepts which it enjoins. The history of these mischiefs, when exhibited, will furnish an argument of the excellence of that religion, which would prevent or remove them. True religion naturally prevents false opinions, and the various inconveniences which flow from them to individuals and communities: did men practise its precepts, these

(a) Bruckeri, Sect. 7.

inconveniences would have been removed; and <sup>1.</sup> S E C T. many of them actually were abolished, in countries enlightened by the Jewish and Christian revelations. It might be expected, in point of order, that I should exhibit the effects of the patriarchal religion, and of that system of superstition which prevailed in the world, before the promulgation of the law. But, as history is not sufficiently clear on either of these points, I am obliged to confine myself to the effects of true and false religion, subsequent to that period. It appears from the history of almost all nations, that men entertain some ideas of divine worship; and that the human mind, unless properly directed, has generally attached itself to unworthy objects; the worship of which has been detrimental to society. Before I describe the effects of Pagan superstitions, it will be necessary to enquire into the origin of idolatry, and into the motives which prompted men to so abominable a practice. This enquiry, while it gratifies the curiosity of many readers, will enable them to understand, more thoroughly, the rise of Heathen superstitions; and the effects which they produced, on the conduct of the Gentiles. It is not easy to determine this question, in a satisfactory manner; as both ancient and modern authors are confused on the subject. Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, differ from each other, and are obscure in explaining the rise of heathenism: while no modern

S E C T. dern mythologist has, in my opinion, treated it

I.

with so much clearness and appearance of probability, as Abbe Le Pluche; from whose writings I have extracted, what seems to me the most natural account of the origin of idolatry. I do not affirm, that this author's hypothesis is every where well founded; nay, it is admitted, that he sometimes pushes his argument too far, like all systematic writers; yet does his general history of the rise and progress of idolatry appear more natural, than that of any other writer, who has treated on this subject. But, as I have made only a short extract from his history of the Heavens; I refer my readers for a more ample account to Le Pluche's work or to Lilius Gyraldus, to whom he is chiefly indebted for information on this subject. A late author (*b*) justly celebrated for erudition, adopts Plutarch's opinion of the Egyptian Mythology, which Le Pluche had condemned as fabulous and groundless: had the learned Brucker read the history of the Heavens, he could not have differed from the ingenious Abbe, without attempting to refute him. They who desire further information on this subject, should also consult Bannier, Bryant, and other writers, who are learned on this topic, though not so clear, upon the whole, as the author whose system I have adopted.

(*b*) Bruckeri Hist. Crit. de philosophia Egyptiorum, Cap. vii. Sect. 14.

All Mythologists are agreed, that we are to seek S E C T. I.  
in Egypt for the origin of idolatry; and that in this fertile soil, it was nurtured and matured. But, Anubis and Sphinx Egyptian symbols not real beings.  
though agreed in the soil and parents, which gave birth to the monster; yet they differ, in accounting for the manner of its production, and in tracing its strides, through so many nations of the earth. Le Pluche proves, that the Egyptians had several figures exposed to public view, which were intended, as an almanack or calendar, to divide the year, regulate the seasons, mark the times of sowing, the inundation or retreat of the Nile, and other important concerns. These figures were called symbols or hieroglyphics; and served as a language to express their wants, to retain the memory of past events, and to convey, in a short and popular way, various kinds of instruction. The primitive intention of them was, to remind men to glorify God; to acquaint them with the progress of the sun, the approach of the dog-days, and many particulars relative to husbandry. The safety of the Egyptians, and their success in agriculture, depended on the direction of the winds, the height of terraces, and the rising of the dog-star; and all these things were denoted by figures of birds and beasts, and of men, women and children in different dresses and attitudes, according to different circumstances. It was a general observation in Egypt, that the hawk flew from North to South, at the approach of mild weather; and

**SECT.** therefore the figure of that bird was thought a  
**I.** proper emblem of Etesian winds, which blew in that direction, about the summer solstice (c). The whoop was a bird which followed the course of the Nile, as it retired within its banks; and fed on new-born insects, that were generated from its mud. The figure of this bird, exhibited in public, was looked upon as a notice, that the waters were subsiding, and proclaimed the time of surveying and sowing their lands (d). The Nile overflowed soon after the sun had entered into Sirius; and the Egyptians called that star the dog-star, for its vigilance, and exhibited a symbol to give warning of the inundation. This figure, called Anubis, had the head of a dog, a vigilant animal, to guard them against the flood; a pot on his arms, to denote provisions; wings on his feet, that they may fly to their terraces; and this symbol was accompanied with a tortoise or duck, an amphibious bird, that lives by the water side; to express the situation of the Egyptians during the flood (e). The Sphinx was a public sign, which acquainted them, how high they were to raise their terraces, to escape the inundation: this figure had the face of a virgin, and the body of a lion couching; to express the inactivity which prevailed during the flood, and the time that elapsed, while the sun was passing through Leo and Virgo (f).

(c) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. Ch. i. N° 8.

(d) Ibid.

(e) Ibid. N° 7.

(f) Ibid. N° 8.

All ancient nations, by a common custom, met <sup>SECT.</sup> at the New-moons, to offer up their praises and <sup>I.</sup> thanksgivings to God for his goodness and beneficence. The Egyptians did so, and filled the places where they met, with significant figures expressive of an intelligence which gives heat and splendour to the sun, fertility to the earth, and success to industry. The principal of these figures were, at first, employed to express the attributes of the Deity, and the regulations of husbandry; but were afterwards made instruments of superstition and idolatry. The Egyptians made the sun, the grandest visible object, the emblem of the Almighty; represented it by a circle in their religious assemblies; prostrated themselves before it; and called that figure, which was only the symbol of God, the Eternal, the Father of Life, the Mighty, the most High. But the mind being, in all public acts of devotion, intent on the sun and on that circle which was its emblem; they soon forgot God, ascribed to the sun those attributes, and at length confounded the creature with the creator. They also represented the governor of the world, by the figure of a man bearing a sceptre; sometimes by that of a coachman with a whip; and called those different figures Osiris; a word which, in the original, signifies inspector, leader, king, soul of the world and governor of the stars: all of which being attributes of the Deity; those figures must have been intended as emblems

Osiris and  
Neptune  
symbols not  
real beings.

**S E C T.** <sup>L</sup> emblems of them (*g*). The Egyptians, in process of time, mistook their most distinguished figure for the father of their nation; and ascribed to him several particulars of the history of Ham. Finding the circle, the symbol of God and of the sun, on the forehead of *Osiris*, they confounded him with them; and ascribed divinity to Ham or Ammon, the father and founder of the kingdom of Egypt. Those figures had different appendages, to express the attributes of the deity; serpents or eels, which were symbols of life and health in Egypt, denoted that God was the author of those advantages; and figures of fruitful plants were annexed to the circle or sphere, to mark the bounties of Providence. They had a figure of *Osiris*, exhibited in public, to denote the annual return of trading ships and merchandise; and called this figure *Poseidon* or *Neptune*; words which signify the provision of maritime countries, and the arrival of fleets: this symbol was afterwards supposed to be the figure of a god who delighted in the sea (*h*).

*Isis, Ceres,  
Diana and  
Venus.*

The Egyptians had several female figures, each of which was called *Isis*: one of them, with a sickle in her hand, denoted harvest; another, in a different dress, was exhibited, when they met at their feasts, to return thanks to God for the

(*g*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. ii. N<sup>o</sup> 1.  
Book I. ch. i. N<sup>o</sup> 9.

(*h*) Ibid.

fruits of the earth. At the feasts of new or full <sup>sect.</sup> moons, they placed a crescent or full moon over the head of the symbol; they proclaimed a plentiful year, by an Isis surrounded with a multitude of breasts; and, on a year of scarcity, exposed an Isis with a single breast, which probably gave rise, to the fable of the Amazons (i). The Egyptian Isis was the same with the Phenician and Sicilian Ceres, the Demeter of the Greeks and Diana of the Ephesians. A figure of Isis, which marked the productions of the earth, was called Diana, and looked on as a terrestrial deity; sometimes, Diana was considered as the moon, from the crescent she wore; and sometimes, as the queen of hell; because, being for some time invisible about new moon, she was supposed to have then visited the regions of the dead. The poets have represented Diana as chaste; and yet are so inconsistent, as to mention her nightly visits to the shepherd Endymion; the origin of which calumny was as follows. It was usual to celebrate the ancient state of mankind, before the flood, near some beautiful grotto or fountain, called Endymion; and to place an Isis there, together with another figure, called Horus, the symbol of work. Endymion was the place where the figure of Diana was deposited; and the poets have represented it as a man, whom Diana was accused

(i) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. i. N<sup>o</sup> 10.

**SECT. I.** of visiting in the night (*k*). There was a figure of Isis, with a child in its lap, which was considered as the symbol of a fruitful woman; this figure was afterwards metamorphosed into a goddess, wholly employed, in disposing men and animals to propagation. This goddess was afterwards called Venus, from the girls who prostituted themselves in her temple, and who were called Venoth, in the language of the Phenicians (*l*).

Mars, Hercules, Vulcan, Apollo taken from Horus an Egyptian symbol.

The Egyptians had several figures, exhibited to public view, expressive of the successive operations of industry, and the state of agriculture; and they called each of them Horus, a word which signifies, in the original, husbandry or skill in agriculture. Sometimes they exhibited the symbol of a full grown man, at other times that of a child, and sometimes that of a youth. The different dresses of the same figure taught them when to begin, and when to end their annual works; and suggested every precaution that was necessary to accomplish them. Horus, with his hands and feet encumbered, and as it were swathed up, marked the inactivity which prevailed during the inundation; the figures were exhibited more free and disengaged in their limbs, as the waters subsided; and Horus asleep was the emblem of repose and rest from labour (*m*). When the

(*k*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. ii. N° 12.

(*l*) Ibid. N° 14.

(*m*) Ibid. Book I. ch. i. N° 10.

Egyptians were preparing for war, they dressed <sup>1.</sup> *sect.* Horus in a military garb, and entitled him the formidable: this symbol was afterwards considered as the figure of a warrior, and assumed different names in diverse countries; Asis among the Syrians, Horus among the Gauls, Ares among the Greeks, and Mars among the Latins. The Thracians, and other warlike nations took him for an ancient worthy of their country, who assisted them in war (*n*). The figure of Horus armed with a club, and exhibited in public, gave notice, that the valiant were going to engage in an expedition, against some wild beast or notorious robber. This public sign, called Hercules, signified the eminent in war; but was afterwards mistaken for the statue of an hero, who was employed in the destruction of robbers and monsters (*o*). Horus, dressed like a blacksmith, was the emblem of mechanic arts, and called Vulcan, a word signifying work dispatched. When war was proclaimed, they separated the symbol of Vulcan from that of Isis, and substituted in its room that of Mars; which gave rise to the fable of Vulcan's jealousy, and the criminal correspondence of Venus and Mars (*p*). The figure of Horus armed with arrows and vanquishing the monster Python, expressed the retreat of the Nile, and the victory

(*n*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. ii. N° 20.

(*o*) Ibid.

(*p*) Ibid. N° 22.

**S E C T. I.** of husbandry, in spite of the inundation. When this symbol was transported into the island Delos, it gave occasion to the fable of Apollo killing Python, and to the Pythian games afterwards celebrated in this and other places (*q*). Some figures of Horus were expressive of the works that were to be done in each season; and therefore Apollo was reported to have pronounced oracles, to have been acquainted with, and to have foretold future events (*r*).

Muses,  
Graces, Pal-  
las, Pales,  
taken from  
the figures  
of Isis.

Egypt was free from inundation for nine months, and overflowed for three; and the Egyptians had nine different figures of Isis, to mark the first days of the nine, and three other figures to denote the three months of inundation. The nine figures gave rise to the fable of the Nine Muses, and the other three to the story of the Three Graces. We cannot entertain a doubt of the truth of this opinion; when we consider, that the original words translated Muses and Graces signify respectively safe from waters, and divorce or interruption of the correspondence between the cities, during the flood. The figure of Apollo, with his harp, was taken from that of Horus or husbandry, delighting himself with music, at the retreat of the waters; and we find the Nine Muses under the direction of Apollo, as those nine months

(*q*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. li. N<sup>o</sup> 19.

(*r*) Ibid. No. 29.

were employed in works of industry (s). It ap- S E C T.  
I.  
pears from the names and functions of the Athe-  
nian Pallas and the Sabine Pales, that they were  
taken from the Isis of the Egyptians. Pales gave  
laws to the husbandmen of Italy; Pallas taught  
the Athenians agriculture: and both these names  
signify public order; in allusion to the functions  
of Isis, who regulated the seasons by various  
signs peculiar to each. At Sais in Egypt a figure  
of Isis was exhibited, as a public sign; to pro-  
claim the marching of troops and levying of sol-  
diers. The Athenians, who were a colony from  
Egypt, armed their Pallas in imitation of this  
figure; and borrowed the manufacture of linen  
from the inhabitants of Sais. The Egyptian Isis  
bore in her hand a weaver's beam; and therefore  
the Athenians imagined that their goddess taught  
them the manufacture of linen, the making of  
stuffs, and the invention of arts (t).

The Egyptians had a figure, called Saturn, the  
symbol of justice, which was afterwards considered  
as a real person by the Greeks, Romans and other  
nations. Homer speaks of him as quick-sighted  
in punishing criminals, and he has been repre-  
sented as fond of being worshipped, by the effu-  
sion of human blood. To mark the end of the  
old and beginning of the new year, they painted  
an old man who seemed to bite off the head of

Symbols and  
funeral cere-  
monies of  
the Egypti-  
ans the  
source of fa-  
bles.

(s) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. ii. N° 29.

(t) Ibid. N° 15.

SECT.  
1.

his son; which gave rise to the fable of Saturn's devouring his own children (*u*). The funeral ceremonies of the Egyptians, and the symbols employed on the occasion, at first conveyed useful instructions relative to the state of the dead: but these symbols were afterwards considered as pictures of the treatment of the deceased in the next world. There was a burial ground near Memphis, on the borders of the lake Ackerusia, at the shore of which, certain judges enquired into the conduct of the deceased. If a man had not paid his debts, or had violated the laws, his body was left unburied, or probably was thrown into a sink called Tartarus (*w*). If no accuser appeared, or only a false accuser, his friends praised his respect for religion, equity, chastity and other virtues; conveyed his corpse over the lake into a plain called Elysium, embellished with brooks, groves and other rural ornaments, thrice sprinkled sand over it, gave three cries, and bid adieu to the dead. To express this in symbolic language they had a figure called Charon, which represented an incorruptible waterman who ferried over such only, as could stand the test. At the entrance of Elysium, they placed the figure of a dog with three heads, called Cerberus; a word signifying the cries of the grave: and they had

(*u*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. ch. ii. N° 39,

(*w*) Ibid. Book I. ch. i. N° 17,

another called Pluto, a symbol of the deliverance see T.  
of the just; which was afterwards transformed <sup>I.</sup>  
into a god, who presided over hell (x). At places  
where carcases were thrown, they exhibited a  
leaking vessel, into which water was incessantly  
poured, and many other figures frightful to be-  
hold; that of a man tied to a wheel which con-  
stantly turned; of another whose heart was per-  
petually gnawed by a vulture; and of one who  
rolled a stone up a hill without intermission,  
which returned immediately to furnish him with  
employment (y). These were probably symbols  
of incessant and endless tortures, to which the  
wicked were exposed; while the virtuous were  
conveyed into the mansions of the happy.

The descendants of Noah represented the Fable of the  
Giants and  
Proserpine.  
dreadful effects resulting from the flood by sym-  
bols; and their principal feasts related to the  
dismal alteration experienced after the deluge.  
They denoted this event, by the figure of a water-  
monster, which rose from under ground; and by  
figures of monstrous giants that sprung out of  
the earth, to dethrone Osiris; whose names were  
Briareus, Othus, Ephialtes, Enceladus, Mimas,  
Porphyryon, and Rhecus. These figures marked  
the disorders that followed the flood, and the un-  
happy state of mankind after that period. Their  
names, translated in the order in which they are

(x) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. Chap. ii. N° 2.

(y) Ibid. Book I. Chap. i. N° 17.

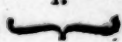
**SECT. I.** written, signify loss of serenity, diversity of seasons, gatherings of clouds unknown before, the havocks occasioned by inundations, earthquakes, great rains and storms. According to the fable, Osiris defeated those giants; and his son Horus, the symbol of industry, assumed the head and claws of a lion, to resist Rhecus, or the wind, which destroyed his hopes. This part of the fable intimated, that they could not avoid the dreadful effects of Rhecus, or the wind, but by watching the sun's entrance into the sign Leo (*z*). The Egyptians had a figure of Isis, which represented the ancient state of the earth disordered by the flood; this symbol regretted the loss of her former fecundity, the want of food to nourish, and of fire to warm and light the people. This figure, afterwards called Ceres, gave rise to the fable of that goddess lighting torches, and with grief and diligence seeking her daughter Proserpine; a word which signifies corn lost among a crowd of weeds (*a*).

Mercury,  
Memnon  
and Bac-  
chus.

The observance of the dog-star procured the Egyptians an abundance of corn; and this people enriched themselves by selling to foreigners. For this reason, the figure of Anubis was often accompanied with a full purse; and men styled it the dealer, the cunning, or only commerce. This symbol was called Camillus among the Heturians,

(*z*) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. Ch. i. N° 14.

(*a*) Ibid. Book I, Ch. ii. N° 45.

Janus, among the Latins, Hermes, among the <sup>SECT.</sup>  
Greeks, and Mercury, among the Phenicians. 

This figure, from being a public sign, was converted into the god of commerce and intrigue : holding in its hand a long pole to measure the rising of the waters ; it was afterwards taken for a leader, an ambassador or an orator. The wings on his feet, at first intended to remind them to fly to their terraces, made them mistake him for a messenger. The fable of the Statue of Memnon, daily uttering a sound at sunrise, arose from the symbol of Horus, exhibited in public, which directed the husbandman, what works were to be done every day in the year (b). When the Egyptians commemorated the infancy of husbandry after the flood, they represented it by the symbol of Horus or a child : and the Greeks, who imitated the Egyptians in their representations, took this symbolic child for a real one, the son of Semele, and called Bacchus in Italy, and Dionysus in Greece, from the expressions of sorrow made use of at this solemnity. That Horus and Bacchus were the same, appears from the writings of the poets, who ascribe to Bacchus all the attributes of Horus, and the operations of industry. It was husbandry, and not any man that ever existed, which guarded against inundations of rivers and tides (c) ; extracted rivers of wine, milk and ho-

(b) Hist. of Heavens, Book I. Ch. ii. N° 26.

(c) Hor. Lib. II. Ode xix.

**S E C T. I.** ney from barren soil, and vanquished Rhecus, or the wind, by observing the sun's entrance into the sign Leo (*d*).

Origin of  
the worship  
of animals,  
of augury  
and other  
supersti-  
tions.

We shall find, that animal worship, augury and other superstitions, had a similar foundation. It was usual with the ancient Egyptians to lead about, at their feasts, certain animals of the same name with the sign, into which the sun entered at that season. The harvest was ended at Thebes, when the sun entered Aries; at Memphis, when he entered Taurus; and at Mendes, when he entered into the Kids. They led about, at their respective feasts, these animals; and in process of time worshipped the ram at Thebes, the ox at Memphis, and goats at Mendes. At the great feast of Isis, a living dog walked foremost in the procession as the emblem of the dog-star; which gave rise to the reverence paid to dogs in many parts of Egypt. Every beast used in their ceremonies, in time became objects of adoration, as the ram, kids, bulls, goats, fishes, serpents, crocodiles, wolves, and several others; and even plants were worshipped, whose foliage was added to the figures of those animals (*e*). The ancient Egyptians never embarked, sowed or planted, without consulting the figures of birds, which served as weather-cocks, to mark the direction of winds and changes of the weather. The hawk, whoop, Numidian

(*d*) Le Pluche, Book I. Ch. ii. N° 45.

(*e*) Ibid. Book I. Ch. ii. N° 41, 42.

hen and Ibis, were public symbols which represent-<sup>S E C T.</sup>  
ed certain winds and gave intelligence about the <sup>I.</sup> weather, the success of husbandry, navigation, trade, war and other undertakings. In process of time they forgot the original import of those figures; and consulted real chickens and other birds at Rome and other places about future events. The husbandman or traveller no longer observed the symbols, in order to know how the winds blew; but waited until some bird appeared, to give the wished-for information; and imagined that birds, which accidentally crossed the air, were messengers of the gods to acquaint them of their intentions. Even the appendages of the principal figures were converted into instruments of idolatry: the symbols Osiris, Isis, Horus and Anubis sometimes held a scepter; at other times an horn to call the people together; sometimes a president's crook to denote a feast where he presided; sometimes a pole to measure the Nile; a reed to signify the support of the vine; and a distaff to mark the helps afforded by the loom. The import of these symbols was in time forgotten; and the scepter, hook and other appendages of the principal figures, were considered as instruments in prognosticating events. Even flutes, lyres, and other musical instruments, employed in their feasts, were mistaken for instruments of divination; various dresses of the same figure gave birth to a new god; and gods were multiplied as much as  
D 3 symbols,

S E C T. I. symbols, by the interpretation of philosophers and  
 I. embellishment of poets (*f*).

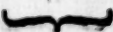
Origin of  
 idolatry and  
 the worship  
 of false  
 gods.

Le Pluche proves, with a tolerable degree of clearness, that other figures had a similar intention; and that the entire group of heathen gods and goddesses originated in Egypt from the use of symbols. That, the Cretans and other nations adopted them, with some variations in attire, name or attributes; that the Phenicians and others, who came to Egypt for corn, introduced them into Europe and Asia; and that the Greeks and Romans transformed them into so many gods and goddesses, demigods and heroes, to whom they ascribed genealogies and historical events. At first, there was nothing mysterious in symbols; they were significant and expressive of their wants, and like a language which every person understood. After the invention of letters, the symbolic language became obsolete, and priests and learned men retained the use of symbols at feasts, burials, and in the outward ceremonies of religion. But in general the original intention of them was forgotten, and men stupidly gazed at them, without understanding their meaning. Interpreters explained them variously, as best suited their fancies or interests; and to these men we may ascribe the extravagant stories of heroes and demigods, which never existed except in the imaginations of men. Had they any foundation in nature, the

(*f*) Le Pluche, Book I. Ch. iii. N<sup>o</sup> 1.

idolatry

heathen

heathen mythology could not have so abounded <sup>S E C T.</sup>  
with errors, fables and contradictions of expositors. <sub>I.</sub> 

Symbols were the alphabet of the ancients; and it is as absurd to seek in nature for any creature like the Sphinx or Anubis, as to enquire into the genealogy of any letter in the alphabet. It may seem extraordinary, that the Egyptians should mistake the original meaning of the symbol of the seasons, which annually returned and was frequently renewed. But it is obvious, that as the old Egyptian year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days, without intercalation; the feasts and seasons must have been gradually displaced. When the symbols no longer expressed the seasons, or the works and feasts proper to them; men naturally forgot that they related to them, or were intended to regulate them (*g*). The author of the Philosophical Principles of Religion is of opinion, that the descendants of Noah engraved on stone, in hieroglyphics, the doctrines of religion and other important truths; dreading another deluge, and thinking this a surer method, than oral tradition, to convey information to posterity. This writer maintains, that in time men forgot the true import of those sacred symbols, and gradually fell into idolatry and superstition (*h*).

A learned author affirms, that the first founder of Egyptian erudition engraved on pillars his laws; <sup>Brucker's  
opinion ex-  
amined.</sup>

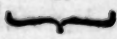
(*g*) Le Pluche, Book I. Ch. i. N<sup>o</sup> 8.

(*h*) Ramsay, Vol. II. Introd.

S E C T.  
I.

and expressed them by figures of animals and other parts of nature, that they might not be lost or forgotten. That symbols were at first invented to elucidate and not to obscure doctrines; not to make religion mysterious, but to render its sublime and intellectual ideas familiar to the vulgar. So far Brucker and Ramsay concur in opinion with the ingenious Abbé; but the former differs from Le Pluche, with respect to the foundation of Egyptian theology, and the origin of idolatry in other nations. Brucker adopts Plutarch's opinion, that the most ancient gods of Egypt were men deified for the benefits conferred by them on mankind. He denies that the Egyptians supposed mere men to be gods, but says they believed a divine energy to have pervaded the universe, some effluvia or particles of which reside in men, who surpassed themselves in genius and useful inventions. He also contends, that Egyptians worshipped the sun, stars and planets as useful to men, animated by some divine influence, and the chief residence of the deity. He owns that the ignorant worshipped the stars and sun without reserve, while the wise considered them only as his throne and residence (*i*). I have rejected the opinion of this very learned writer as founded on hypothesis, and unsupported by a single conclusive or even probable argument. Osiris, Isis and others, whom Le

(*i*) Brucker de philosophia *Ægyptiorum*, Cap. vii. Sect. 8 and 14.

Pluche proves to have never existed, Brucker sup-<sup>SECT.</sup><sub>L.</sub>poses to be real persons, who flourished in Egypt.  He denies that Egyptians worshipped mere men, and yet admits that wise, good and useful men were objects of their veneration. This author, conscious of his own inability to explain the signification of symbols, assigns several causes of difficulty and obscurity in them. He asserts, that Egypt underwent several changes from inundations, which obliged the ancient inhabitants to migrate; and from the invasions of foreigners, who introduced new customs and new doctrines into that country. The Egyptians being ridiculed by foreigners, for the worship of the sun, stars, heroes and animals; the ingenious attempts to explain their superstitions have added to the obscurity (*k*). Priests also contributed to render hieroglyphics obscure, by explaining them in a manner which was calculated to impose on an ignorant and servile people, and to promote their own interest and that of their rulers (*l*). Poets too contributed to render the heathen mythology obscure, by celebrating the fame of heroes in hyperbolic language; and by ascribing to them the attributes of the Supreme Being. To these heroes, the divines, who were poets, sung praises in verse, with which sort of composition, among the ancients, fable and fiction were always found united.

(*k*) Brucker de philosophia Ægyptiorum, Cap. vii. Sect. 12.

(*l*) Ibid. Sect. 2.

When

## S E C T.

1.

Causes of  
obscurity in  
heathen  
mythology.

When once the fabulous age of the poets began, the sense of ancient symbols was disfigured; the most sublime truths were turned into extravagant visions; and in time, the original import of hieroglyphics was lost or forgotten, in the numerous interpretations of expositors. Historical interpreters imagined, that the fictions of poets contained the genuine history of kings and generals; and applied to these, as to real personages, what had been related of kings and heroes in the fables of poets. Physiologists interpreted symbols, in a physical way, by the different parts and operations of nature, of which they thought them emblems or representations. The Stoics, says Seneca (*m*), represent the several functions of the Supreme Being, under different names; sometimes they call him Bacchus, the father and fountain of all beings; Hercules, because indefatigable and invincible; and Mercury, from the reason, order and wisdom of his proceedings. St. Augustine (*n*) assures us, that the true God assumed different names, according to the effects which he produced. "In the ethereal spaces he is called Jupiter, in the air Juno, in the sea Neptune, in the earth Pluto, in hell Proserpine, in the element of fire Vulcan, in the sun Phœbus, in divination Apollo, in war Mars, in the forest Diana, and in the sciences Minerva; all that crowd of gods and

(*m*) De Beneficiis, Cap. xii.  
IV. Cap. x.

(*n*) De Civ. Dei, Lib.

goddesses are only the same Jupiter whose different powers and attributes are differently expressed." Anaximander, Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, and all the materialists thus understood symbols, contrary to the spirit of those ancient hieroglyphics. These men considered the combats of the gods, with the Titans, as allegories expressive of the different changes and discord of the elements; and the effects of those explanations were fable and impiety (e). Some refined philosophers as Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, explained the symbols and fables of the poets in a theological way, and maintained, that they represented things spiritual and divine. Certain Jews and Christians held, that heathen mythology was founded upon the writings of the Hebrews, and on the history of that people; that Osiris and Jupiter were Adam; Isis and Juno, Eve; Tubalcain, Vulcan; Bacchus, Noah; that Apollo, Adonis, Mythras, Mars, Mercury and Hercules were Abraham, Moses, Joshua; and, in short, that all the Jewish heroes were gods of the Gentiles. This system, though defended by the learned Bochart, Vossius, Huet, Thomassin, Gale and other writers, is improbable and ill-founded for many reasons; but for one especially, that Heathens, who hated the Hebrews, were unlikely

S E C T.  
I.

(e) Ramfay, Vol. II. Introd.

**S E C T.** to deify their legislators, or pay divine honours to  
 1. the worthies of that nation (*p*).

Cicero's opi-  
 nion exam-  
 ined.

Some have imagined that poets, who give life and energy to things inanimate, have encreased the number of popular deities, by giving the name of some god to things salutary and useful to mankind: to the earth Ceres, to the sea Neptune, and to the air Juno. Cicero (*q*) affirms that the Egyptians worshipped no beast, except for the advantages derived from it to society; as the Ibis, for preserving the country from the plague, and devouring winged serpents brought thither from the desarts of Lybia. And as poets, by magnifying the achievements of heroes, and ascribing divine attributes to them, caused men to erect altars and monuments in honour of them; so painters and sculptors seconded the fiction, and contributed, not a little, to the establishment of those errors. Tully (*r*) assures us, that men formed ideas of Jupiter, Juno and the rest of the gods, from images and statues presented to their senses by painters and statuaries. I admit that poets, painters and sculptors, by their fables and representations, have confirmed and riveted the errors of the people; but the Roman orator does not explain the origin of idolatry, nor shew what gave rise to poetical fables and representations of

(*p*) Ramsay, Vol. II. Introd. Sect. 12.

(*q*) De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. Cap. xxxvi.

(*r*) Ibid. Cap. xxix.

their gods. He shews indeed, that the people s e c t.  
were misled by poets and artists; but gives no <sup>1.</sup>  
hint of the source of error in those men themselves. It is admitted, that poets and painters are apt to indulge their fancies, and accustomed to exaggerate; but usually borrow from nature or history the outlines of their work: what foundation then was there in nature for the Sphinx or Chimera, or in history for the fabulous account of Jupiter and Juno? Le Pluche has cleared up the difficulty, told us what suggested those ideas to poets and painters, and explained the origin of Pagan superstitions.

Having enquired into the origin and progress of Effects of Paganism in Egypt.  
idolatry, I proceed to examine the effects of the  
superstitious opinions entertained in Egypt, Greece, Italy, and other Gentile nations less polished and civilized. In treating this subject, I shall not trouble my readers with the fables and genealogies of the Heathen gods and goddesses, which are known to every school-boy; but shall make such observations on the popular religion of the Pagans, as may enable men to perceive its tendency and effects, and the necessity of revelation to abolish or prevent its pernicious influence. The ancient Egyptians celebrated several feasts, in honour of their gods; at which were exhibited many scenes of cruelty and disorder. In the feast of Isis, they tumbled an ass down a precipice; in that of Mars, they fought furiously with clubs; and in the feasts  
of

**S E C T.** of Bacchus, they indulged freely in riot and debauchery (s). Nothing could be more absurd than the worship paid by the Egyptians to cats, dogs, wolves, crocodiles, and several kinds of beasts. They had lands set apart for their maintenance; and persons of distinction attended them, who were respected for being engaged in that sacred office. If any of these animals was killed with design, the offender was instantly put to death; if involuntarily, he was punished at the discretion of the priests; when dead they were lamented, and their funerals celebrated with great expence and solemnity. The ancient Egyptians had so superstitious a veneration for a cat, that the killing this animal undesignedly was punished with death (t). Diodorus Siculus assures us, that the populace were so enraged at a Roman, who accidentally killed a cat, that neither the authority of the king, nor respect for the Roman name could save him from destruction: they even chose to eat each other, in a season of famine, rather than kill one of those sacred animals (u). There was a spotted calf kept at Memphis, in beautiful fields; all whose motions were judged ominous and prophetic; and to which offerings were made under the title of Apis. This idol was

(s) Rosi's Religion of all Nations, Sect. 2.

(t) Ancient Univ. Hist. Vol. I. folio, Book I. Ch. iii.

(u) Broughton's Dict, Art, *Ælurus*.

consulted, by observing into which of two cham- S E C T.  
bers, prepared for him, he entered; and prog- I.  
nostics were drawn from his accepting or de-  
clining food that was offered him. They pre-  
vented the indecency of his death, by drowning  
him; interred him with devotion mixed with sor-  
row; and then sought for a calf with similar spots.  
They had also a sacred ox, at Heliopolis, which  
brought crowds thither, to offer up their devoti-  
ons; and priests encouraged those frauds from  
motives of interest (*w*). The principal gods of  
Egypt were worshipped all over the kingdom;  
while the worship of inferior deities was not uni-  
versal, but confined to particular cities and pro-  
vinces. Several cities were denominated from  
the gods or animals worshipped in them, as Diof-  
polis, Heliopolis, and Cynopolis; almost every  
city worshipped a different idol, and the inhabi-  
tants of some eat the animals revered by others.  
Diodorus Siculus affirms, that this diversity of  
worship was a source of disturbances; and that  
those dissensions were fomented by kings, in order  
to divide the turbulent into adverse sects, to keep  
them employed in religious contention, and thus  
to prevent conspiracies against them (*x*). Cam-  
byses the Persian monarch, in his war against  
Egypt, laid siege to Pelusium; and, finding his

(*w*) Hist. of the Heavens, Book I. Ch. ii. N<sup>o</sup> 42.

(*x*) Ancient Univ. Hist. Vol. I. folio, Book I. Ch. iii.  
Sect. 1.

troops

**SECT.** I. troops galled by the enemies arrows, made use of  
 { a stratagem which succeeded admirably. He placed in the front of his army a multitude of cats, dogs, sheep, and other sacred animals: protected by these, he advanced with safety to the garrison, and made himself master of it; the Egyptians being afraid, even to throw a dart (y). Hence it is evident, that the superstitions of Egypt had a considerable influence on the policy of that country, and the temper of its inhabitants; while they did not in the least improve the morals of the people. Juvenal (z) thus describes the superstitions of Egypt and the effects of them, in his fifteenth satire :

Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens  
 Ægyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat  
 Pars hæc: illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibim.  
 Illic cæruleos, hic piscem fluminis, illic  
 Cppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.  
 Porrum et cæpe nefas violare, ac frangere morfu.  
 O Sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis  
 Numina! Lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis  
 Mensa. Nefas illic fætum jugulare capellæ;  
 Carnibus humanis vesci licet.

Fish-gods you'll meet with fins and scales o'ergrown:  
 Diana's dogs ador'd in ev'ry town;  
 Her dogs have temples, but the goddess none.  
 'Tis mortal sin an onion to devour;  
 Each clove of garlick has a sacred pow'r:

(y) Polyænus Strategematum, Lib. VII. Cap. ix.

(z) Beginning of Satire, and Dryden's Translation.

Religious nations sure and blest'd abodes,  
Where ev'ry orchard is o'ergrown with gods.  
To kill, is murder, sacrilege to eat  
A kid or lamb—man's flesh is lawful meat !

S E C T.  
I.

Heathen nations attributed to their gods anger, fear, grief, jealousy, and several passions and imperfections unworthy of the divine nature. Ter-tullian (*a*) asks the Gentiles the following questions : is there any of your deities equal in wisdom to Socrates, in justice to Aristides, in war to Themistocles, in greatness to Alexander, in prosperity to Polycrates, in eloquence to Demosthenes ? which of them is so grave or wise as Cato, so excellent a soldier as Scipio, so mighty as Pompey, so rich as Crassus, or so eloquent as Cicero ? The Heathen religion did not promote the honour of God, or the good of his creatures ; the gods of the Gentiles were rather branded for their vices, than distinguished for their virtues ; and patronized impurity by their lives and actions. They were guilty of adultery and incest, stole, murdered, and committed the most unnatural crimes : according to the popular religion, Mercury was a thief, Venus a prostitute, Bacchus a drunkard, and Jove dethroned his father Saturn, who had murdered his own offspring, and who was delighted with sacrifices of little children. Homer, though he calls Jupiter father and king

(*a*) Apolog. Cap. x. xi.

E

of

**S E C T.** of gods, counsellor, deliverer, defender of houses  
 I. and cities; yet makes him guilty of incest with his sister Juno and his daughter Minerva; of pederasty with Ganymede, and of ravishing Europa and several others. According to the theology of this poet, the father of men and gods is the author of strife (*b*); encourages the Trojans to perjury by his daughter Venus; loves Sarpedon and Hector and grieves for them (*c*). The other gods conspired against Jupiter and would have bound him with chains had they not dreaded Briareus (*d*). Mars and Venus are wounded by Diomedes; gods and goddesses are armed against each other; and Jupiter expresses a more ardent passion for his wife Juno, than he ever did for any of his wives or mistresses before (*e*). This god lay with Alcmena in the shape of her husband: and Minerva assisted Ulysses to hide his money in a cave, and to wrestle with a beggar (*f*). So unworthy were the ideas which the Tyrians entertained of their gods, that they chained the statue of Hercules, that he might not desert to Alexander the Great who besieged them (*g*): while the Persians adored Arimanius the author of evil; the Greeks their Cacodemons, and the Latins their Vejoves (*h*). Hea-

(*b*) Iliad IV. 34.

(*c*) Iliad XVI. 433, and XXII.

168.

(*d*) Iliad I. 399.

(*e*) Iliad XIV. 315.

(*f*) Odyss. Lib. XIII.

(*g*) Quin. Curt. Lib. IV.

cap. xiv.

(*h*) De Nat. Deorum, Lib. III, Sect. xxiv.

thens made offerings to a fever, winds, and to <sup>SECT.</sup>  
every thing that could hurt them; and Theseus <sup>I.</sup> }  
and Alexander the Great sacrificed to fear, that  
their troops might not be terrified on the y of  
battle. Titus Tatius worshipped the goddess  
Cloacina, and both Greeks and Romans erected  
temples to contumely, impudence, and licentious-  
ness (i). The gods of the Gentiles were so im-  
pure, obscene and detestable, that Julius Africanus  
advised their votaries, to convert their temples  
into theatres, and their players into priests; that  
they might sing the amours and impieties of their  
gods. Plato condemned the Pagan theology, and  
the genealogies of the gods, by Hesiod and  
Homer, as false and impolitic; and maintained  
that, though true, they ought not to be pub-  
lished; as tending to debauch the morals of youth,  
and encouraging revenge, murder, rapes, drunken-  
ness, theft, and rebellion against parents. This  
philosopher condemns Homer, for representing  
the Gods as constantly engaged in feuds and con-  
tention; and asserts, that poetical fables ought to  
serve the wise purposes of policy or morals (k).  
Cicero applauds Plato for banishing Homer and  
other poets from his imaginary republic; " Since  
even their absurdities do mischief by the pleasant-  
ness of the stile in which they are written: these  
men introduced gods inflamed with anger and

(i) Tully de Leg. Lib. II. cap. xi. and xvii.

(k) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. XIII. ch. ii.

**S E C T.**  
**I.** lust; and exhibited their wars, wounds, hatred, dissensions, births, deaths, complaints, lamentations, their excessive intemperance, adulteries, fetters, copulations with mortals, and men sprung from immortal gods (*l*).” Such was part of “the beautiful mythology which, according to Mr. Gibbon, pervades and animates the compositions of Homer, Virgil, and other poets,” though the most impure and deformed that fancy could devise! This historian represents Pagan worship as consisting of sacrifices, processions, spectacles, feasts, good humour and elegant arts, and omits every circumstance which proves it a system of lust, cruelty, and immorality. Had the historian of the Roman empire known, that Plato and Cicero had condemned this system, he might perhaps have had some deference for their authority, and not have censured the fathers for reprehending the poets. I cannot suppose this writer so depraved in taste and morals, as to be enamoured of paganism, and to call its rites elegant ceremonies and innocent devotions, had he examined its deformity or the effects which it produced. It will presently appear, that these effects were such as might naturally have been expected from their opinions of their gods. The author of the Jewish letters (*m*) briefly sums up these effects in the fol-

(*l*) De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. Sect. xvi. and Tusculan Quest. Lib. II. ch. xi.

(*m*) Part III. Letter I. Sect. iii.

lowing words: "Here behold a sacrifice of female modesty; there human blood flows upon the altars, and the dearest victims expire in those flames which superstition has lighted up. A little further violence is offered to nature, by brutal love; every where the people live in shocking ignorance, and the philosopher in error and uncertainty." It will now appear that these and other crimes were the genuine fruits of Heathen superstitions.

An universal corruption of manners was the natural consequence of Heathen theology; the morals of Heathens were such, as might reasonably be expected from the conceptions which they formed of adulterous, incestuous, and impure gods; whom they thought it laudable to imitate in all their abominations. The Pagan gods being guilty of enormous crimes, their votaries suited their worship and practice to the ideas which they entertained of them. He who wished to commit adultery was encouraged by the example of Jupiter, he that was delighted with unnatural love, viewed Ganymede in Jove's embraces, or Hiacinthus in Apollo's; and the horror of incest was extenuated, if not excused, by the marriage of Jupiter to his sister Juno. Venus, the patroness of strumpets, promoted numberless adulteries, rapes and incests by her example and suggestions: she had a son by her brother Mercury (n), and

Impurity,  
adultery and  
drunken-  
ness, effects  
of Pagan-  
ism.

(n) Tooke's Pantheon, Part II. Ch. vii. Sect. 2.

**SECT. I.** incited and assisted Niſimene (o) and Myrrha (p) to commit inceſt with their fathers. The Romans, who boated a deſcent from her ſon Eneas, erected temples in honour of her, and ſhe was the chief goddeſs worſhipped at Rome, by all females. Harlots worſhipped her for gain, pure virgins for beauty, matrons for concord with their huſbands, widows for huſbands, and all for ſecundity (q). The Athenians, Chians, Thracians and others, originally worſhipped Cotytto, the goddeſs of wantonneſs, with the moſt lewd and immodeſt rites; and her prieſts, called Baptæ, celebrated her myſteries, in the night, with dancing and all manner of obſcenities. Eupolis wrote a play on the impure practices of the Baptæ, and theſe men, in revenge, flung him into the ſea (r). The Phenician women uſed annually to ſhave their heads in token of grief, for the death of Adonis the favourite of Venus. They who reſuſed to comply, were bound to prostitute themſelves for an entire day, to all ſtrangers that deſired it; and the money was preſented to her temple, where lewdneſs and the moſt impure commerce was practiced, to mitigate the ſorrows of the mournful goddeſs (s). Heathens had ſeveral laſcivious figures of Jupiter, by one of which Terence's Cherea (t) was encouraged to a rape. Example is more pre-

(o) Ovid. Met. Lib. II.      (p) Ibid. Lib. X.      (q) Roſs, Sect. 4.      (r) Broughton, Art. Baptæ.      (s) Anc. Univ. Hiſt. Vol. I. folio, Chap. vi. Sect. 1.      (t) Eunuch. valent

valent than precept, and men, disposed to gratify <sup>sect.</sup> their passions, were more influenced by the actions of Jupiter, than by the doctrines of Plato, or the maxims of Cato; and never wanted the example of a God to justify adultery, fornication, and the most unnatural pollutions (*u*). Even the public worship of Pagans exhibited, in some cases, scenes of lewdness and impurity. Priests almost naked, celebrated the Lupercalia in honour of Pan (*w*); and the learded Potter affirms, that some rites employed in the Greek festivals were impure; though considered by some as innocent devotions. The Locrenses vowed, that if victorious in a war in which they were engaged, they would prostitute their virgins on the festivals of Venus (*x*). The Aphrodisia, in honour of Venus, were celebrated in different parts of Greece with impure rites; and in her temple at Byblus in Syria, women prostituted themselves to strangers on a certain day, and the hire of impurity was consecrated to that Goddess (*y*). Such were the unhappy effects of Mr. Gibbon's innocent devotions, and of ignorance of the worship of the one true God! But these were not the only fruits of his elegant mythology; the ancient Greeks celebrated night festivals, called Nyctelia, in honour of Bacchus, with lighted torches, drinking, and

(*u*) De Civ. Dei, Lib. II. Cap. vii.

(*w*) Kennet.

(*x*) Justin, Lib. XXI. Cap. iii.

(*y*) Leland's Christ.

Revelation, Part I. Chap. vii.

**S E C T. I.** the worst of impurities; and the Romans afterwards celebrated them in Italy (z). Such scenes of licentiousness were exhibited on the festivals of Bacchus, that matrons were warned not to be present at them; and Aristippus, speaking of a chaste woman, says, she will not be corrupted, even at the Bacchanalia (a). So abominable were the rapes, poisons, and murders in Rome and other places on those feasts, that they were abolished in Rome by the Roman senate; and at Thebes by Diagondus, as Cicero (b) assures us.

Paganism a  
source of  
cruelty.

We have already proved, that Pagan superstitions produced the natural effects in some instances; and the same will appear from the following facts, with which history acquaints us. In Sparta boys were severely scourged in honour of Diana Orthia, and the cruel ceremony was performed so rigorously, that they often died on the occasion (c). The Romans, in the beginning of a war with the Gauls, buried alive two males and two females, in obedience to an oracle (d); and Porphyry affirms, that in his own time a man was slain at the feast of Jupiter Latialis (e). The priests of Bellona offered sacrifice to that goddess, in their own blood (f); held in each hand naked swords, with

(z) Broughton, Art. Nyctelia.

(a) Sext. Emp.

Pyrrhoniarum, Lib. III. Cap. xxiv.

(b) De Leg. Lib. II.

Cap. xv.

(c) Potter's Antiq.

(d) Plutarch's

Life of Marcellus.

(e) Leland, Part I. Chap. 7.

(f) Tooke, Part II. Chap. ix.

which

which they cut themselves, and wildly ran up and down like men mad or possessed (g). In time of public calamities, governors offered up children to avenging spirits, to avert the evils which they felt, or with which they were threatened. The Carthaginians attempted to remove a pestilence by sacrificing innocent children on the altars of their gods (h), and Agamemnon put his daughter Iphigenia to death, to appease the anger of Diana whose stag he had slain. The Phenicians were obliged to offer annual sacrifices of infants to Saturn, and the ancient Carthaginians to Moloch. Among the latter people, mothers were required to attend the sacrifices of their own children, to stifle their feelings, and even to affect joy at the cries of their infants: if a tear or groan escaped, the offering was supposed to lose its merit, with those blood-thirsty deities. The bloody sacrifices, which prevailed among the Carthaginians, had a considerable influence on the manners of that people; they were cruel and inhuman both to friends and enemies, and callous to every sentiment of tenderness and pity. The Druids sacrificed human victims to their gods; some they pierced with darts; others they crucified; and laid some on piles and burned them to death. Those barbarous practices induced Augustus to prohibit the religion of the Druids, and those cruel rites were

(g) Laët. Lib V. Cap. x. and Lib. I. Cap. xxi. (h) Justin, Lib. XVIII. Cap. vi.

**SECT.** quite abolished by Tiberius and Claudius (i). On  
 I. this and other crimes of Heathens, Lactantius (k) makes the following very pertinent observations: How could they abstain from blood who worshipped such bloody gods as Mars and Bellona? How should they spare their parents, who worshipped Jupiter that banished his father out of heaven? Or spare their children, who adored Saturn that devoured his own children? How should they preserve chastity who worshipped a naked and adulterous goddess and common prostitute? How shall they abstain from robbery and fraud, who are acquainted with the thefts of Mercury, and teach that to deceive, is not fraud, but cunning? How shall they bridle their lusts who adore Jupiter, Hercules, Bacchus, Apollo and others, whose adulteries and impieties are acted and sung on theatres that they might be known to all? How shall they be just who are encouraged in injustice by the example of their gods." These crimes were the fruits of that system, from which Mr. Gibbon has ingeniously selected, what he calls elegant rites and innocent devotions. Strange, that he should extol a system blended with rites so detestable and hideous; while he saps the foundation of that pure and benevolent code, which tends to abolish those

(i) Suet. in Claudio, Cap. xxv. Broughton, Art. Druids, and Strabo, Lib. IV. edit. Amstelod. 1707, p. 308. (k) Lib. V. de Justitia.

crimes, and actually has abolished them in all countries, where it has been promulgated !

S E C T.  
I.

Besides the acts of cruelty already ascribed to Paganism, there are several others, equally shocking, which have originated from that source. The

The same  
subject con-  
tinued.

ancient Germans, Gauls and Britons worshipped the sun, stars and planets, and sometimes sacrificed men to their idols. The Scythians and Thracians offered every hundredth captive to Mars ; the Germans paid the same compliment to Mercury ; and the Cimbrian priestesses used to cut the throats of captives, that they might foretel the event of war by inspecting their bowels. The Lithuanians ripped open mens bowels, for the same purpose ; and imagined they did not please the devil, unless they tortured captives before they sacrificed them (*l*). We find instances of human sacrifices, not only in barbarous countries, but even in Greece and other civilized nations. Themistocles (*m*), in order to procure the assistance of the gods against the Persians, sacrificed some captives of that nation ; and Bacchus (*n*) had an altar, in Arcadia, upon which young damsels were beaten to death with rods. Achilles butchered twelve Trojan captives at the funeral of Patroclus (*o*) ; and Eneas, so famed for piety, offered up eight persons as sacrifices to Pallas (*p*). The inhuman sacrifices

(*l*) Rofs, Sect. v. (*m*) Plutarch's Life. (*n*) Broughton, Art. Sacrifices. (*o*) Homer's Iliad, xxiii. 175. (*p*) Virgil's Æneis, x. 520.

offered

**SECT.**  
**I.** offered to Moloch, Saturn, and Pagan idols; and the detestable practices in the service of Baal-Berith, Cybele, Venus, and other deities, should inspire an horror of those superstitions, and induce us to admire that religious system which is free from them; and which has abolished similar practices in all countries, where it has been introduced. The poet was prompted by bloody offerings, so common in ancient times; and by ignorance of true religion, to confound superstition and rational worship, and to impute to the latter the fruits of the former. The sacrifice of Iphigenia, at the port of Aulis, occasioned Lucretius (q) to make this confusion, and to ascribe to religion the fruits of superstition.

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*Sæpius olim*  
*Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.*

Consider that religion did, and will  
 Contrive, promote, and act the greatest ill,

And again,

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

So died this innocent, this royal maid,  
 Such devilish acts religion could persuade.

Heathens have been guilty of many other crimes; but I have confined myself, in this place, to those only which were committed, in compliance with their superstitions. The crimes perpetrated in

(q) Lucretius, Book I. v. 84 and 102, Creech's translation,  
 confor-

conformity with the prejudices of the Gentiles, <sup>S E C T.</sup>  
furnish an argument in support of that religion, <sup>L</sup> which tends to remove those prejudices. The bad effects, resulting from false religion or from corruptions of the true, prove the excellence of the latter, and point out to rulers the duty of directing the minds of their subjects, to the proper object of worship, if not to obtain the advantages which naturally flow from true religion, at least to prevent the inconveniences which have arisen from false. If the land be not sowed with good seed, it will be overgrown with noxious weeds; superstition or enthusiasm will occupy the place of true religion, and be made instruments in promoting the schemes of the wicked and designing. This has been the case in Pagan countries, and even in countries, where true religion has been perverted or misunderstood; as will fully appear in the course of this history.

Perhaps it may be expected that the bad effects of Paganism were counteracted by its ministers, by theatrical performers, by the wisdom of philosophers and the policy of statesmen. We shall find, <sup>Pagan priests and players did not restrain vice in the Roman empire.</sup> that this last was some barrier against vice and immorality; while the other three were but feeble restraints, and, in some instances, rather encouraged men in vice than deterred them from it. The heathen gods neither furnished their votaries with moral precepts, nor offered motives to the practice

SECT.  
I.

practise of them : Augustine (r) denies, that Pagans ever delivered moral precepts, in the name of those gods ; and challenges gainsayers to point out the places, where such precepts were read or heard by the people. The duty of Gentile priests did not require them to inculcate sobriety, purity, justice, and the social virtues ; the people, on pain of displeasing the gods, frequented the temples, and attended the sacrifices and other rites ; but the priests made it not their business to teach them virtue, as Locke (s) expresses it. Paganism was a compound of fable and fraud, and its priests directed mens attention to the most unworthy objects ; the ghosts of persons remarkable for lewdness, bloodshed, rapine, and even to the beasts that perish. These men were so solemn in the celebration of the most ridiculous rites, and affected such gravity in the performance of the most barefaced tricks, that Cato expressed his surprise, that an haruspex, or soothsayer, could look his fellow-juggler in the face, without bursting into laughter (t). Nor did some theatrical exhibitions of the Romans, encourage modesty and purity of manners, on the decline of their republic (u). Actors worshipped Berecynthia, the mother of the gods, in the most indelicate language, and obscene gestures ; and exhibited to crowded assemblies

(r) De Civ. Dei, Lib. II. Cap. v. and vi.  
ableness of Christianity.

(s) Reason-  
(t) De Divin. Lib. III. Cap. xxiv.

(u) De Civ. Dei, *ibid.*

scenes shocking to the eyes and ears of the virtuous and chaste. Yet these impure exhibitions were thought agreeable to the gods, and sometimes instituted for the purpose of appeasing them, in time of pestilence or other public calamity (*w*). It could not be expected that men should practise purity of morals, from a sense of religion, when the mother of the gods was supposed to be delighted with the impure rites of such filthy spectacles. Their theatres were schools of lewdness, where the lascivious actor recited adulteries or exhibited them, and kindled in others the passion which he represented (*x*). In Rome they devoutly celebrated plays, once a year, in honour of Flora; and harlots ran up and down the streets, by day and night, naked; expressing the most obscene gestures and filthy songs: nor were these exhibitions discountenanced, but encouraged by the magistrates of that city (*y*). Their youth were admitted to those impure pastimes; nay the sagest senators, gravest matrons, and the most rigid magistrates, were present at them. In a word, their theatrical entertainments were, in some cases, so abominable, that the ears must be defiled by hearing filthy speeches, and the eyes by seeing the lewd gestures of actors; and yet these men were rewarded, as if they had contributed largely to the service of the republic (*z*).

S E C T.  
I.(*w*) De Civ. Dei, Cap. vii.(*x*) Min. Felix, Sect. 37.(*y*) Ken. Antiq.(*z*) Hackwell's Apol, Book IV. Chap. vi.

Sect. 1.

S E C T.  
I.

Philoso-  
phers did not  
restrain vice  
by precept  
or example.

Nor were philosophers themselves always pure in their doctrines, and exemplary in their lives; on the contrary, some of the principal sages recommended and justified fornication by precept and example. Aristotle (*a*) thought it lawful, to procure abortion; and Plato (*b*), to expose children. Democritus and Epicurus condemned marriage (*c*); Plato (*d*) the Epicureans and Stoics (*e*), nay Socrates and Cato (*f*), allowed fornication and a community of wives. Aristippus (*g*) permitted pederasty, Epicurus (*h*), Zeno and the Stoics (*i*), tolerate incest; and unnatural love is authorised by the Cynics, who were shameless in their amours. Epictetus was surprised at the self-denial of Socrates, who slighted the youth and beauty of Alcibiades; and Maximus Tyrius applauds Agefilaus for only looking at, and admiring a beautiful boy. Solon allowed the love of boys, and prohibited it to slaves as too great an indulgence (*k*); and the Cretans encouraged masculine love by law, to prevent a numerous offspring (*l*). Unnatural crimes were committed in Juno's temples, in the time of

(*a*) Polit. Lib. VII. Cap. xvi.(*b*) De Rep. Lib. V.

Edit. Steph. 1587, p. 461.

(*c*) Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib.

II. Cap. xxiii, Vol. I. Edit. Oxon. 1725, p. 503.

(*d*) De

Rep. Lib. VIII.

(*e*) Sext. Empir. Pyrrh. Lib. III. Cap.

xxiv. Edit. Antwerp, p. 526.

(*f*) Tert. Apolog. Cap.

xxxix.

(*g*) Diog. Laert.(*h*) Theoph. Antioch.

Lib. III. ad Autolych. Edit. Paris, 1636, p. 120.

(*i*) Sext.

Emp. ibid. p. 529.

(*k*) Leland's Christ. Revel. Part I.

Chap. vii.

(*l*) Arist. Polit. Lib. II. Cap. x.

Julius Firmicus (*m*); and Cicero's Cotta, a man <sup>SECT. I.</sup> of rank and refinement, acknowledges himself guilty of the crime against nature; and justifies the deed by the authority of philosophers (*n*). This offence was committed in Rome in a barefaced manner, in Seneca's time; and the Scantian law prohibited the public marriages of men to men; which were so common in that city, and so familiar to the satirist (*o*); that he speaks of them with less horror, than of the fights of gladiators,

*Vicit et hoc monstrum tunicati fuscina Gracchi.*

Yet Gracchus, thou degenerate son of fame,  
Thy pranks are stigmatis'd with greater blame.

Even some illustrious characters among the ancients have been guilty of suicide, and other crimes which tarnish the lustre of their brightest virtues. Brutus put himself to death; Timoleon murdered his brother upon principle; and Cato of Utica put an end to his existence; being unable to support the weight of his calamities. Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Zeno Cleombrotus and Menippus, were also guilty of suicide; the three first maintained, that the crime against nature is as allowable as fornication; while Zeno and Cleanthes held, that children may eat the flesh of parents. The Cynics

(*m*) De errore profanarum religionum. (*n*) De Nat. Deor. Lib. I. Cap. xxviii. (*o*) Juv. Sat. ii. 143, and Dryden's translation.

**S E C T.** <sup>L</sup> contended that parents have a right to sacrifice and devour their children, and that there is no shame in committing publicly any act of lewdness. The founder of this sect convinced the world, that he was true to his principles, by exhibiting himself in the streets in the arms of a prostitute. Aristippus, though rich, refused to maintain his children, considering them as spittle or vermin produced by his body; kept a seraglio of boys and courtezans; and maintained that a man might lawfully commit theft, sacrilege, or adultery, as a means of gratifying his brutal appetites. Xenophon practised the most unnatural pollutions with Clinias; Crates, and the female philosopher Hipparchia, cohabited publicly, and Socrates and Plato have been accused of crimes with persons of their own sex (*p*). Such were the doctrines and lives of public teachers among the Heathens! Such were the fruits of ignorance of the doctrines and motives of true religion! Philosophers, it must be admitted, enjoined a love of their country and friends, in elegant and sublime language; but their benevolence seldom went further, they rarely extended their kindness to the rest of mankind. Socrates declared it lawful to rejoice at the misfortunes of enemies; and one of the seven wise men says, be kind to your friends, and revenge yourself on your enemies (*q*). Zeno contended,

(*p*) Skelton's Deism revealed, Dial. II.  
 Adolatrour Corruptions, Vol. II. Chap. iv.

(*q*) Young's

that a man should not pardon those who offended <sup>SECT.</sup>  
him; and even the amiable Germanicus exhorted <sup>I.</sup>  
his friends to be revenged of those who poisoned  
or bewitched him (r). Cicero (s) reckons it the  
chief duty of justice that no man shall injure ano-  
ther unprovoked; and, in another part of his Of-  
fices, affirms, that a good man offends no person  
unless instigated by ill-usage. Even the gods of  
the Heathens were vindictive as well as immoral;  
Juno persecuted Eneas even after he had settled  
in Italy, and the goddess of wisdom applauds  
Ulysses for ungenerously exulting over his van-  
quished rival in his madness and distress (t).

Ουκουν γελως ηδιστος εις εκθρους γελαν.

Is it not the highest sport to laugh at enemies?

I do not deny that Plato, Epictetus, Marcus An-  
toninus, and few others, argued against the return  
of injuries; but a learned writer proves their ar-  
guments for forgiveness to be false in some re-  
spects; and that their motives to this virtue, were  
far inferior to those which were offered by the  
gospel (u).

It cannot be denied that Greeks, Romans, and  
other nations, practised some virtues highly useful  
to the purposes of government. Lawgivers in-  
culcated reverence for an oath, deified truth,

Pagan law-  
givers in-  
culcated  
some vir-  
tues.

(r) Deism revealed, Dial. II. (s) De Officiis, Lib. I.  
Cap. vii. and Lib. III. Cap. xix. (t) Sophocles' Ajax  
Masfig. Act I. Scene i. (u) Leland, Part II, Chap. x.

**S. E C T. I.** justice, concord, fidelity, and erected temples to them. No person acquainted with Roman history can be ignorant, how strict that people were in the observance of oaths, and how averse from breaches of them. We should not be surpris'd, that they held oaths sacred and inviolable, who were taught, that the violation of an oath brought down the wrath of heaven upon the perjured, and branded them with infamy and disgrace on earth(w). That a veneration even for the false gods of the Heathens, contributed to make oaths binding, leagues obligatory, and compacts inviolable, appears from a passage of Cicero in his second book of laws. This author speaking of religion, thus expresses himself; who can deny the utility of these opinions, that knows how many things derive strength from the obligation of an oath, and what advantage the religious observance of treaties produces (x)? The laws of the twelve tables, as an encouragement to valour, enjoined honour, not only to those gods who have always been esteemed such; but also to Hercules, Esculapius, Romulus, Castor and Pollux, who have been deified for their merits. Those laws prohibited men to worship any vice, and required them to rank among the gods those commendable qualities by which heroes obtained heaven, as understanding, virtue, piety and fidelity (y). When the

(w) Laws of Twelve Tables.

(x) De Leg. Lib. II.

Cap. vii.

(y) Laws of Twelve Tables.

Romans would impress a sense of any virtue, or <sup>SECT.</sup>  
abhorrence of any vice, on the minds of the people, <sup>I.</sup> they dedicated a temple to it. They erected temples to victory, concord and fidelity, built one to liberty, and poured out their supplications before the altar of fear, that their troops might not be dismayed in the hour of danger. A celebrated historian (z) assures us, that Numa, in order to render private contracts obligatory, deified Fidelity; built a temple to it, and instituted sacrifices in honour of it at the public expence. He expected that a regard for this virtue, diffused through the state, would gradually be communicated to every individual; and was not mistaken. Faith became so respected, that she had more weight than witnesses and oaths; and the civil magistrate, in cases of difficulty, sometimes rested the determination of a cause on the faith of the contending parties. Another eminent historian (a), speaking of the Romans, sincerely regrets the degeneracy of his own countrymen, who were then on the decline; while the Romans were making large strides towards universal empire. He declares, that the ancients introduced those notions of the gods and of a future state wisely; and that the present generation betrayed great weakness in rejecting them, and appeals to facts for a proof of his assertion. "In Greece, says he, they who

(z) Dion. Halicarn. Cap. lxxv. page 75, Edit. Oxon. 1714.

(a) Polybius, Lib. VI. Cap. xxxiv.

**S E C T.** are entrusted with the public money, though it be  
 I. but one talent; and though they should give a  
 tenfold security, before twenty witnesses; yet cannot be prevailed on to keep their faith: while among the Romans, it is as rare to find any person offending in this way." It is however to be observed, that Pagan lawgivers allowed temples to Bacchus, Venus, &c. inculcated moral and social duties but imperfectly; and that these duties were not the natural effects of paganism and instruction of priests, but of political wisdom, which employed false religion in enforcing those virtues. Statesmen enjoined such virtues as were absolutely necessary to the well being of communities; political expediency engaged them, to encourage morality among those who were subject to their authority: but virtue requires a firmer basis than mere political wisdom; a support entirely independent of human institutions. When civil establishments were overturned, and the Roman government was transferred from the wise, to the vilest tyrants; then the foundation of morality was subverted, and the Romans became the most vicious, and dissolute of all people of the earth.

Paganism  
 a mere political  
 engine.

The wisest of the ancient Heathens employed superstition to purposes merely civil, and made it subservient to their political designs. Aided by false religion, they enforced the practice of particular virtues; were enabled to soften the manners of a rugged people, to elude the claims of  
 factious

factionous demagogues, and used it as an instru-<sup>SECT.</sup>  
ment in extending their conquests. For these<sup>I.</sup> purposes statesmen, who were ignorant of true religion, encouraged superstition among their subjects, built temples, raised altars, offered sacrifices, and celebrated games in honour of their gods. They did not attempt to remove vulgar errors and popular credulity; but carefully inculcated them, in order to obtain the advantages already hinted at. To excite men to great exploits, and enforce obedience to the laws and magistrates, they taught, that some Pagan gods had been heroes, legislators and benefactors of mankind, who were exalted to heaven for their virtuous exertions. It appears from several passages of Cicero, that the popular deities of the Heathens were but kings, and men who contributed largely to the benefit of their country. That false religion was cultivated in different countries to serve purposes of government and policy, appears from this, that the chief men generally assumed the direction of all matters relative to their superstitions. The dignity of the priestly office usually devolved upon kings, and persons of the first distinction; Amphiloehus and Mopsus were kings of the Argives, and also Augurs (b); and the Spartan princes, on their accession to the throne, were obliged to assume the sacerdotal function. Anius was a tem-

(b) *De Divin.* Lib. I. Ch. xl. and xli,

S E C T.  
I.

poral prince and priest of Apollo (c); and Priam had his son Helenus and his daughter Cassandra instructed, the former in augury, and the latter in prophesy. Tully (d) affirms that no person could be king of Persia who was not previously acquainted with the discipline and wisdom of the Magi. The emperor of China possessed the pontifical function, as the most exalted person to do homage to Shangti. The fifth emperor prohibited any, except emperors, to sacrifice to the deity; and, in case of sickness, he commanded some mandarin to perform that office (e). Formerly, the Japanese emperors were daios or sovereign pontiffs, and their persons were so sacred, that an opposition to their religious or civil decrees, was detested as a crime against God himself: they assumed blasphemous titles, and admitted of homage bordering on idolatry (f). The Egyptian kings had their magi; the British, Gallic and Irish states their druids: the Spartan kings their augurs; and the Athenian kings and magistrates their manteis. The more honourable the ministers of religion, the greater influence they were supposed to have with the deity; to derive blessings upon

(c) Virg. *Æneid*. Lib. III. 80.(d) *De Divin.* Lib. I. Cap. xli.(e) *Mod. Univ. History*, Vol. III. Folio. *Introd. to History of China*.(f) *Ibid.* Vol. III. and *Refnal's Settl.* Vol. I. Book I.

the people, to deprecate the vengeance of the <sup>SECT.</sup>  
gods, and to avert public and private calamities. <sup>I.</sup>

Vandale proves, that Heathen oracles originated <sup>Heathen oracles.</sup>  
in the craft of priests, and in the credulity of men, who paid a blind veneration to those supposed interpreters of the will of the gods. That these oracles served as political contrivances, appears from the learned treatise of that writer, and from the answers which were usually returned to the queries of the inquisitive. The Athenians, having consulted the oracle of Apollo relative to the mode of worship that should be adopted among them, the oracle commanded them to adhere to the religion of their ancestors (*g*). Ambiguity and obscurity were their general characteristics; and priests returned such answers, as gratified the consultors, and suited their own purposes, and those of their rulers. In cases where the responses were more explicit, if the event did not correspond with the prediction, the priests ascribed the failure to some error in the interpretation, or to some defect in the mode of consulting the oracle. In the tenth year of the siege of Veii, the Roman soldiers, despairing of success, importunately desired to return home: but the Alban lake having overflowed, they were easily prevailed on to persist in the siege; as an oracle declared, that the city of Veii would be taken, the very

(*g*) Cicero de Leg. Lib. II. Cap. xvi.

**S E C T. I.** year in which the lake overflowed (*b*). In all cases priests, initiated in religious mysteries, observed the profoundest secrecy; and encouraged errors, which were beneficial to the state, and profitable to themselves. We cannot entertain a doubt, that these jugglers turned to their own use, large shares of the donations made to the temples in which they presided. When the Romans consulted the oracle, about the overflowing of the Alban lake, we find, towards the conclusion of the Delphic answer, quoted at large by Livy, that the interest of the temple and priests was not forgotten nor disregarded. "When you have ended the war," says the god, "and vanquished your enemies, bring ample offerings and donations to my temples (*i*)."  
 Vandale (*k*) affirms, that cities, where oracles were consulted, were chiefly inhabited by inn-keepers, by sellers of frankincense, spices, and beasts for sacrifice; and by augurs, aruspices, priests, poets, and other ministers of religion, who derived a subsistence from the lucrative traffic. These impostors dispatched emissaries to distant regions, to propagate the fame of oracles; and employed spies at Rome, and other places, to obtain intelligence of the business of consultors (*l*). An extraordinary imposture was

(*b*) Livy, Lib. V. Cap. xv. and xvi.

(*i*) Ibid.

(*k*) Dissert. I. de Oraculorum Ethnicorum Origine & Authoribus, Cap. v.

(*l*) Ibid. Cap. i.

practised by the oracle of Trophonius, on those <sup>3 E C T.</sup> who consulted it; he who descended into the cave <sup>I.</sup> of this god, to consult his oracle, was required to drink inebriating waters; and jugglers practised deceptions on him when he was thus intoxicated. While the consultor was beside himself, or otherwise unguarded; or by overhearing his prayers to Trophonius, or by intelligence of his domestics, the priests discovered his business, and were prepared in their responses (m). These men sometimes protracted the time, by prayers, sacrifices, ablutions and inspection of the bowels of animals; that they might, in the interval, obtain some hint of the errand of consultors. Those who desire further information with respect to oracles, I shall refer to this eminent writer, who is so learned on the subject.

Let us now take a view of the political effects of paganism, when employed, as an instrument, in the hands of legislators and rulers of states. Finding the people rough and superstitious, and themselves, for the most part, strangers to true religion and its genuine effects, lawgivers and chief magistrates took advantage of the prejudices of their subjects, and converted false religion to the useful purpose of civilization, and restraining the ferocity of rude and uncultivated societies. Livy (n) assures us, that this was the object of

Some particular effects of Paganism in Heathen governments.

(m) Dissert. I. de Oraculorum Ethnicorum Origine & Authoribus, Cap. viii.

(n) Lib. I. Cap. xix.

**S E C T. I.** Numa in instituting religious rites in his infant re-  
public. Q. Curtius (o) affirms, that nothing go-  
vern barbarians more effectually than false reli-  
gion; that, when under its influence, they are  
more obedient to priests than to generals; while  
they are cruel, fickle, and ungovernable, uninflu-  
enced by that principle. As to the influence of  
paganism in the Roman empire, I shall be more  
particular, and point out its political effects in  
war and peace, in elections of kings and assem-  
blies of the people. It was an established custom  
of the Romans, in almost every enterprize civil  
or military, to draw presages of the event from  
the flight or chirping of birds, the entrails of  
beasts, the answers of oracles, the interpretation  
of dreams, and prodigies (p). In all these cases,  
the priests were interpreters, and explained every  
thing, as best suited their political convenience.  
Magistrates were deposed, and public assemblies  
were adjourned or dissolved, when thunder and  
lightning came from the left. Tully (q) assures  
us, that it was unlawful to hold assemblies, while  
there was thunder and lightning; and insinuates,  
that for the service of the republic, they sought  
pretexts for disbanding the people. Livy ac-

(o) Lib. IV. Cap. xxxix.

(p) De Nat. Deor. Lib. II. Cap. lxxv.

(q) De Divin. Lib. II. Cap. xviii.

acquaints us, that the augur, at the election of <sup>SECT.</sup>  
Numa, having marked out the divisions of the <sup>I.</sup>  
heavens with his curved staff, and laying his right  
hand on Numa's head, thus addressed a prayer to  
Jupiter: "We pray you, father Jove, if you  
approve of this Numa, whose head I hold, for  
king of Rome, to give some sign of your appro-  
bation within those limits which I have marked  
out with my staff (r)." Among the Romans, su-  
perstition and ignorance were the bulwarks of the  
Patrician prerogatives, against the encroachments  
of the Plebeians. This latter class were perpetu-  
ally instigated by seditious tribes, to extort from  
the nobles a share in the public offices, which had  
been monopolized by the Patricians. Of all their  
various artifices to counteract, and defeat the de-  
signs of the Plebeians; superstition was the chief;  
by its influence they deposed magistrates, and pro-  
rogued assemblies, which were met to enact popu-  
lar laws; and by the means of this instrument  
they were enabled to enlarge their own authority,  
and abridge that of the people. In the year of  
Rome 356, the military tribunes were all, except  
one, elected from the Plebeians: the same year  
a plague and famine having raged at Rome, the  
Patricians took advantage of the terrors and cre-  
dulity of the people, to inveigh against the inno-  
vation, as the cause of those disasters. They

(r) Lib. I. Cap. xviii.

maintained,

**S E C T. I.** maintained, that the gods were angry at the admission of plebeians to the consular dignity; and, by this artifice, prevailed on the people to restore the ancient mode of election, and to choose military tribunes of the subsequent year out of their own body (s). After Rome had been burned by the Gauls, the people, urged on by their tribunes, were with difficulty prevented from removing to Veii, and making that city the seat of empire. Camillus diverted them from their purpose by a speech, the conclusion of which was a pathetic address to the prejudices of a superstitious people. "Here, in this city, says that general, have been preserved the sacred fires of Vesta; here the shields, sent down from heaven, have been deposited; while we remain in this city we may be certain of the protection of the gods (t)."

Effects of  
various Pa-  
gan Super-  
stitions.

Many of the prodigies related by Livy and Dionysius were so absurd, as to impose on the credulous vulgar only. Other phenomena, such as eclipses, comets, meteors, showers of blood and stones, or monstrous births, were accounted prognostics of direful events, and have terrified whole Roman legions who were ignorant of the causes of those appearances. Few generals would hazard an engagement, or undertake any expedition without consulting the ministers of religion, who judged of the event from the ease or difficulty with

(s) Livy, Lib. V. Cap. xiv.

(t) Ibid. Cap. liv.

which a victim was led to the altar. If it struggled on receiving the blow; if it ran away; if the entrails fell out of the priest's hands; or if certain animals crossed the way to the left; in all these cases it was reckoned a certain sign of the displeasure of the gods. When an ox, led to be sacrificed, advanced with an easy air, in a right line, and without resistance, it was accounted a good omen and luckily prognostic: whereas, his resistance, his windings, and manner of falling, gave rise to several interpretations. Aruspices examined the entrails of victims, and concluded the gods approved of a project, if they were found; and condemned it, if they were defective. The Romans imagined, that the sacred chickens were never neglected without loss; nor attended to without success (*u*): and supposed that these birds could tell better when to engage, than an experienced general (*w*). In consequence of this opinion, the generals of those days were so attentive to superstitious rites, that they usually suspended an enterprise, until they consulted the chickens, and their keeper, about the event. Upon their feeding greedily, or only scattering their food, was thought to depend the success of a battle; often the fate of a kingdom or state. History acquaints us, that the commander who treated them with disrespect, was certain of being

(*u*) Minucius Felix, Sect. xxvi.

(*w*) Bayle's Observations.

**SECT.**  
**I.** censured as impious, and the author of public calamities. In the first Punic war, the chickens being consulted by offering them food, and the birds having declined it, Claudius Pulcher flung them, in anger, into a pool of water, that they might drink, as he expressed it, since they refused to eat. Tully (x), in the character of Lucilius, relates this instance of impiety, affirms that this ridicule of the gods was the cause of a defeat at sea, and of great grief to himself and country; and that the inattention of his colleague Junius to the auspices, was supposed to have occasioned the loss of a fleet in a storm: therefore, says Lucilius, Claudius Pulcher was condemned by the people and Junius put himself to death. Cicero observes, on the death of these two men, that the republic was enlarged, during the command of men who had been attentive to religion. We are told of a Jew who was present, when an augur commanded the army to halt, until he observed the flight of a bird, and drew a presage from the direction which it took. The Jew, who was but a private soldier, shot at the bird and killed it with an arrow, to convince them of the folly and absurdity of their superstitions. The augur and others, enraged at the impiety of the Jew, poured out curses and maledictions upon his head; in answer to which the Jew exclaimed, "What infatuation, to suppose that this bird, which foresaw nothing of its

(x) De Nat. Deorum, Lib. II. Cap. iii.

own death, should foretel any thing of the event S E C T.  
I.  
of our journey (y).

The history of the Romans assures us, that their superstitions assisted them in extending their conquests. They rarely ventured a battle, without a strong persuasion of the approbation of the gods, signified to them, by the various means already described. Certain of the divine protection, soldiers marched into the field of battle, inspired with religious confidence; and fought with that intrepidity, which commonly ensures success. Nothing could more forcibly excite soldiers to martial achievements, than to see their generals animated by the same enthusiasm; nor so strike terror and consternation into foes, as to see adverse leaders, confident of the immediate protection of the gods, rush forward unawed by danger, unterrified by death. So great was the influence of superstition on the minds of Roman officers and soldiers, that Cicero (z) ascribes to it the extraordinary fortitude, with which they encountered dangers: generals often exposing themselves to certain death, rushing blindfold among their enemies, and devoting themselves to the immortal gods, for the service of the republic. The same author (a) asserts, that the instruments, to which the Romans were chiefly indebted for the conquest

Paganism  
assisted the  
Romans in  
extending  
their con-  
quests.

(y) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. IX. Cap. ii.

(z) De Nat. Deor. Lib. II. Cap. iii.

(a) De Aruspicum responsis.

**SECT. I.** of the world were not strength and policy, but piety and religion. Horace (*b*) ascribes victory and extent of empire to the religious principle; and in the same ode, attributes all the miseries which Italy endured to a disregard of that principle. Here I cannot avoid pointing out one very extraordinary effect of Pagan superstitions; namely, that by extending the Roman conquests they contributed to disseminate the Christian religion. The knowledge of the gospel was more rapidly diffused through one great empire, where a general communication must necessarily have subsisted, than it could possibly have been propagated through so many distinct and independent republics (*c*).

Superstition  
contributed  
to the de-  
struction of  
the Roman  
empire.

It is a curious observation, that as superstition was instrumental in the growth of the Roman empire, so it contributed to subvert and destroy it. The truth of this observation appears, from the following facts, with which history acquaints us. Woden, a great warrior, being banished from Asia by Pompey, retired with his followers to the northern kingdoms; and conquered Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Finding his end approaching, he assembled his friends together, gave himself nine wounds in a circular form in their presence, and declared he was going to be enrolled with the other gods of Scythia, and would reward all who died intrepidly, with arms in their hands.

(*b*) Carm. Book III. Ode VI. v. 5.

(*c*) Bossuet's Hist. of the World, Part III.

By his bravery, artifices, and self-murder, he was <sup>SECT.</sup><sub>I.</sub> deified after his death by a superstitious people; and his doctrines contributed to the destruction of the Roman empire (*d*). His followers called him, by way of honour, the god of armies, the father of slaughter, the depopulator, the incendiary. Warriors promised to devote a certain number of persons to him who was supposed to protect the valiant; or to choose victims to follow him to the other world, where they were to be happy. The effect of this doctrine was to render men fierce, desperate and enterprising, and to inspire an enthusiastic and sacred thirst for blood (*e*). The revenge of injuries offered to their country or parents, the Scythians considered as a sacred duty; Woden adopted this bloody doctrine and recommended it to the Cimbri, Germans and other northern nations; in order to spirit them up against the Romans, who banished him from his country. This vindictive spirit continued, a long time, rankling in their breasts, before they were enabled to gratify it by their actions: but when they had recovered the losses which they had sustained, in their wars against the Romans, they invaded the western empire, destroyed the Roman state, and fully revenged the sufferings of their ancestors (*f*). Thus the Roman empire, which owed much of its gran-

(*d*) Williams's Hist. of Northern Kingdoms, Book II.

(*e*) Refnal's Settl. Vol. II. Book I.

(*f*) Williams, *ibid.*

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I.

deur to the artifices of priests, and to rigid virtue, was utterly destroyed by the vices of the Romans, and the doctrines of this impostor. Montesquieu (*g*) assigns several causes of the decline of the Roman empire, and the depravity of its inhabitants; while Montagu (*h*) considers the "atheistical doctrines of the sect of Epicurus as the real cause of the rapid depravity of the Roman manners; as long," says this ingenious writer, "as the religious principle remained, it controled manners and checked the progress of luxury in proportion to its influence; but when atheism had corrupted this principle, the great bar to corruption was removed, and the passions were left without check or control." I admit, that the immoral principles of Epicurus tended to corrupt the manners of the Romans; and that the superstitions of this people attached them to their country, and rendered them valiant. But to support his opinion he ought to have proved, that the gods of the Heathens enjoined morality, and forbade luxury and dissoluteness of manners. If the superstition of the Romans was not a system of pure morality, I cannot comprehend, how atheism, or a disbelief of false gods, could possibly have led to vice, or depravity of manners.

The state of religion among Pagans proves the necessity of supernatural aid.

I have now exhibited a few of the most striking instances of the influence of ancient Heathenism,

(*g*) Rise and Decline of the Roman Empire.

(*h*) Montagu's Rise and Fall of ancient Republics.

in

in some Pagan countries ; and the history of every <sup>SECT.</sup>  
other Gentile nation will furnish numerous in-  
stances of similar effects. But as modern Paganism  
is less known to most readers than ancient, I shall,  
in my third section, point out its fruits ; and con-  
clude with a few general observations on the con-  
tents of this section. From what has been deliver-  
ed, the Pagan religion appears, in many instances,  
to have been a system of cruelty, fraud and im-  
purity, blended with some innocent devotions as-  
cribed to it by Mr. Gibbon. Priests were not  
required by their duty, to instruct men in mora-  
lity ; and philosophers were insufficient to incite  
men to virtue, by precept or example. Some  
philosophers, it must be admitted, condemned the  
popular religion and idle fables of the poets ; and  
entertained exalted ideas of God and his attributes :  
but these ideas were blended with vulgar errors  
and superstitious practices. The wisest sages visit-  
ed the temples, whose rites and ceremonies they  
affected to despise ; and encouraged divination and  
all the other artifices of statesmen. Socrates be-  
ing accused of not acknowledging the gods of the  
republic, Xenophon (i) appeals to his conduct,  
for a refutation of the charge ; since he was often  
seen to sacrifice in his own house, and in the  
temple. Besides, no person can deny that he  
believed in divination ; since he declared, he re-

(i) Memorab. Defence of Socrates.

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received counsel from his guardian demon, and sacrificed a cock to Esculapius, at the hour of his death. Plato (*k*) observes, that the Delphic oracle ought to direct, what gods the state should worship; and prescribe the mode of adoration. Cicero (*l*) affirms that a wise man should adhere to the sacred rites of his ancestors; and Epictetus (*m*) recommends offering up libations, sacrifices and first fruits; after the custom of his country. Since then the luminaries of the Pagan world did not oppose, but encourage the popular religion, and conformed themselves to the established worship; since, in many instances, they were ignorant of true religion, and bound by the laws to support the false; and since they wanted information to dissipate error, and authority to enforce the precepts of morality; how deplorable was the condition of the Heathen world, unassisted by some extraordinary illumination; how insuperable their ignorance, and how necessary the divine interposition? The insufficiency of philosophers, to prescribe a rational mode of worship, and to enforce their precepts by proper sanctions, proves the expedience of supernatural assistance, to extricate men from superstition and its direful effects. I now proceed to shew, that the Hebrew lawgiver delivered his people from the idolatries prevalent

(*k*) Laws, Book VIII. ipso initio.

(*l*) De Nat. Deor. Lib. III. Cap. ii.

(*m*) Enchiridion, Cap. xxxi.

in his time ; and that the law, the prophets, and <sup>I.</sup> S E C T.  
the judgments of God, afterwards preserved the }  
Jews from these and other superstitions, which  
have already been deseribed ; while Christianity  
banished Paganism from many countries, and ex-  
tended the benign influence of the gospel to all  
nations where it has been established, as will ap-  
pear in the third section.

## S E C T. II.

## EFFECTS OF JUDAISM ON THE HEBREWS THEMSELVES, AND ON THE SENTIMENTS OF PAGANS.

*Design of the miracles of Moses and of his whole law. — Intention and effects of the sabbath. — Of the Hebrew festivals. — Of the sabbatical year, jubilee and laws of usury. — Of clean and unclean beasts and the place of worship. — Means employed to procure respect for God. — Of the tabernacle and temple. — Of sacrifices and lustrations. — Tendency of the theocracy and of temporal sanctions. — Effects of those sanctions in the time of judges. — Effects of them in the time of kings. — Intention of particular laws and rites of Judaism. — The same subject continued. — The same subject continued. — General tendency of the Mosaic rites, precepts, and prohibitions. — The Mosaic rites and institutions local and temporary. — Laws of Moses preferable to those of Pagan lawgivers. — His writings of divine authority. — Temporal sanctions prove his divine commission. — The truth of his account confirmed by Bryant. — Judaism imperfect. — Judaism prepared men for the gospel. — Hebrew writings useful in chronology and history. — Mosaic account of the creation tends to remove some errors of naturalists. —*

*Jews*

*Jews and their tenets known to ancient Pagans.—Hebrews and Heathens relate the same facts.—Plato borrowed from Hebrews.—Orpheus, Homer, Solon and others borrowed from them.—Greeks indebted to them by the testimony of the learned.—Ancient philosophers borrowed their theology.—Greek philosophers were plagiaries.—Their absurdities prove that they borrowed their theology.—Divine attributes not investigated by reason.—Brucher errs in denying that Heathens borrowed from Hebrews.—The same subject continued.—He errs in denying that Plato borrowed from them.—He errs with respect to the similitude of Jewish and Pagan dogmas.—Whether the law allowed of human sacrifices.—How far it was lawful to eject and destroy the Canaanites.—The election of the Hebrews no argument of divine partiality.*

**O**F all people of the earth, there are none to whom the attributes of God have been so clearly exhibited, as to the Hebrew nation: they were convinced of his power, by his miracles in Egypt, and by their deliverance from servitude; of his goodness and wisdom, by his compliance with their infirmities, and employing the most likely means to render them moral; and of his justice, by his rewarding the observance and punishing the violation of his laws, even in this life. In the early ages of the world, when mens understandings were unaccustomed to abstruse reasonings,

SECT.

11.

Design of  
the miracles  
of Moses  
and of his  
whole law.

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sonings, such extraordinary exertions of the divine attributes were absolutely necessary; since even in refined ages, it requires attention and labour to deduce these attributes either from causes or effects. God suffered Pharaoh's heart to be hardened that he should not let the Israelites go; in order to display his power to both Israelites and Egyptians, and that the former of these people should be sensible of this and other attributes, when exhibited to their senses, and felt by them experimentally. Moses dictated some laws, which were applicable to all nations, and of perpetual obligation; while others were local, and adapted to their particular circumstances, in the land of Canaan. The decalogue, though peculiarly addressed to the Israelites, is applicable to all nations, as men and citizens; while God authorised Moses to enact several political and ceremonial laws, well suited to the exigencies of his people. We are not to consider the Jewish institution, as a complete system of religion; even Moses knew it to be defective, and would have furnished a more perfect one, were it not for the hardness of their hearts. It appears from several passages of Exodus, which were prior to the Levitical law, that he wished to revive the old patriarchal system (*a*); the Hebrew doctors (*b*) maintain, that his chief design was to inculcate reverence towards

(*a*) Exod. Ch. xix. and xxv.  
sede & officio Christianorum.

(*b*) Thomas Burnet de

God and good-will to man; but finding their <sup>SECT.</sup> proneness to idolatry, on his return from the <sup>II.</sup> mount, he indulged them with numerous rites; for the purpose of diverting them from the worship of idols. When they despised the covenant and decalogue, and manifested an attachment to the worship of calves; then did the lawgiver give them a multitude of rites; in order to wean them from idolatry; and we find these rites condemned by the prophets as despicable and useless, when unaccompanied by justice, mercy, and integrity of heart (c). To form a just idea of the influence of the Jewish code, let us take a short view of the feasts, rites, customs, precepts and prohibitions of Moses: such a view will readily convince the reader, that each and all of them tended to one great end, to promote morality; to extirpate or prevent idolatry; and to preserve a knowledge of the one true God. In treating on this subject I shall consider the effects of the Jewish ordinances in the Hebrew government; and also the influence of the Mosaic and prophetic writings on the theology of the most celebrated Pagan philosophers.

The greater part of mankind in the early ages of the world, believed the stars, sun, moon and other planets, to be eternal; and considered these and other parts of the visible world as chief objects of adoration. To remove the opinion of the

Intention  
and effects  
of the sab-  
bath.

(c) Psalm v. Isai. i. Jer. vi. 20. Hosea vi. 6. Micah vi. 8.  
eternity

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eternity of the world, Moses assures the Israelites that God created those things which Gentile nations deemed eternal and divine; and that the sabbath was instituted to commemorate the creation, and to induce men to look upon created things as unworthy of their worship (*d*). That the prevention of idolatry was the primary end of its institution, appears from several passages of the Old Testament: men are exhorted to shun idols in the same passages of scripture which enjoin an observance of the sabbath; and the worship of idols and breach of the sabbath are frequently joined together in holy writ (*e*). But besides the original intention of sabbatical rest, this festival reminded them of their deliverance from bondage; contributed to inspire them with humanity to strangers and domestics; and to mitigate the rigours of servitude in despotic governments, where mens bodies might be worn with incessant toil without a day of recreation (*f*). After the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity they observed the sabbath so strictly, that they thought it unlawful to travel beyond a certain distance, to kindle a fire, or dress meat on that day; and were so superstitiously rigid in this respect, that they declined even self-defence when

(*d*) Spencer de legibus Hebræorum, Lib. I. Cap. iv.

(*e*) Exod. xx. 16. Exod. xxiii. 12. Lev. xxvi. 1. Ezek. xx. 18. Ezek. xxii. 8. Ezek. xxiii. 37. Malachi i. 44.

(*f*) Fiddes's Body of Divinity, Vol. II. p. 85.

attacked on the sabbath. Having experienced SECT. II. the inconvenience of their absurd rigour, they decreed it lawful to fight in defence of life on this day; but this decree not suffering them to destroy the enemies works, or prevent their designs until they came to execute them, Pompey forbade his soldiers to attack the Jews on the sabbath, but to employ all diligence in erecting their engines and advancing their works; by which stratagem they soon possessed themselves of the temple and city of Jerusalem (g).

The Israelites who settled in Egypt during Joseph's administration multiplied quickly, and their descendants, a little before the time of Moses, were a warlike, rich and well-united people, indefatigable in trade, agriculture, and feeding numerous herds. The Egyptians, alarmed at their growing power, obliged them to carry heavy burdens, in order to enervate their bodies, and prevent their encrease. Pharaoh, finding this method unsuccessful, directed the midwives to destroy all the males; and, when they evaded that order, commanded even the parents to drown their male children in the river Nile. About this period, Moses was sent by God, to remonstrate with Pharaoh, about his cruelty and injustice; to conduct his people from this land of servitude; to convince that prince of his divine commission, by several miracles wrought in his presence, and by

Of the Hebrew festivals.

(g) Lewis's Hebrew Antiquities, Book IV. Chap. xvi.

several

SECT. several successive plagues inflicted on his people.

II. These miracles, however tremendous, did not prevail on the king to let them go; until God sent an angel to destroy the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast; while he passed over the houses of the Israelites. In consequence of this judgment, they were permitted to depart, and the Jewish lawgiver instituted the passover, to commemorate this deliverance; to remind them of the miraculous power by which it was accomplished; and of the goodness of God which they were so apt to mistrust (*h*). The feast of Pentecost celebrated the delivery of the law by Moses in fifty days after the feast of Passover: the Israelites met annually on that festival, to return thanks to God for their harvest, and to commemorate his mercies, by sacrifices and public rejoicings (*i*). On the feast of Tabernacles they returned thanks, for the fruits which they gathered in, and for the happiness which they enjoyed in commodious habitations, who formerly wandered about in the wilderness without any certain abode (*k*). The feast of New-moons, as it determined the times of the other festivals, was celebrated by the sound of trumpets; by extraordinary sacrifices (*l*); by abstinence from servile works (*m*); by attendance on divine service (*n*), and by offering the first fruits of every

(*h*) Fiddes, Vol. II. p. 86.

(*i*) Exod. xxiii. Lev. ix. 9.

(*k*) Lewis, Book IV. Chap. xx.

(*l*) Numb. xxviii. 11.

(*m*) Amos viii. 5.

(*n*) 2 Kings iv. 23.

month to the giver of all things. Moses limited his feasts to three, while Heathens devoted a great part of every year to the celebration of theirs; his festivals commemorated some signal benefits, while theirs were celebrated on frivolous and often on ridiculous occasions: the former were dedicated to exercises of piety as well as mirth; while those of the latter were chiefly devoted to idleness and debauchery.

Besides those annual feasts, the Hebrews had other solemn times of devotion, and observed every seventh year, as a year of rest and cessation from labour. They were forbade to plow, sow or prune; and what the earth produced spontaneously that year, belonged as much to strangers, orphans, and poor, as to the proprietors of the ground (o). The sabbatical year inspired Israelites with humanity to strangers and slaves, and taught them their dependance on that God, who provided for them so abundantly. On this year, insolvent debtors were discharged from all debts contracted to supply the necessaries of life; and the great end of the release, was to prevent the distressed Hebrew from flying to Gentiles, and forsaking his religion. None except Israelites or proselytes of righteousness were discharged from their debts; and this privilege was refused to strangers, and even proselytes of the gate (p). The jubilee was en-

Of the sabbatical year, jubilee, and laws of usury.

(o) Lev. xxv. 4, 6. Deut. xv. 2.  
IV. Chap. xxii.

(p) Lewis, Book

joined

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joined on every fiftieth year, and had almost the same privileges as the sabbatical, with this difference ; that the sabbatical year released men from their debts, while servants were manumitted, and lands restored to old proprietors on the year of jubilee. There was no agriculture in this year, all things were in common, and to bondsmen and persons reduced to poverty, the joys of this solemnity were boundless and sincere. This season restored to them liberty and property ; the prison doors were opened, slaves were released, and every man was restored to the enjoyment of his ancient possessions : all slaves and prisoners were declared free by the sound of trumpets, all lawsuits were ended, and all lands sold or mortgaged were restored to the old proprietors (q). The chief design of this institution, was to preserve the equality at first established in the Hebrew republic ; and the great object of that equality was to attach men to a country, where their estates could not be alienated, for more than half a century, and to prevent their flying from Palestine and changing their religion ; by removing all apprehension of perpetual poverty and oppression (r). None but Israelites or circumcised converts could enjoy the benefits of the jubilee ; and even these might forfeit its benefits, if they sold their possessions to carry on trade, or for any purpose but a supply of

(q) Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, Sect. 4.

(r) Lewis, Book IV. Chap. xxiii.

their necessities. The law relative to usury was <sup>SECT.</sup>  
founded on their polity with respect to property, <sup>II.</sup>  
and absolutely unjust with respect to other nations;  
a man having as just a right to what his money  
produces by trade or otherwise, as to the rent  
made by the industry of others. The prohibition  
of usury being founded on an equal division of  
land, there could be no reason for it in countries  
where that equality did not subsist. A people  
little concerned in commerce were not supposed  
to borrow, except to relieve them in distress, and  
the prohibition was intended as an indulgence to  
such men; "if thou lend thy money to any of my  
people that is poor, thou shalt not be unto him  
as an usurer (*s*);" that is, thou shalt not treat  
him with rigour, as is the custom of usurers. In  
Leviticus (*t*) they were absolutely forbade to take  
usury from a brother Israelite reduced to poverty,  
or from a proselyte; but there is a passage of  
Deuteronomy (*u*), which seems to tolerate usury  
towards persons who are neither Jews nor pro-  
selytes.

The Jewish legislator distinguished between clean  
and unclean beasts, and excluded some animals  
from the tables of Israelites (*w*); for the purpose  
of separating them from convivial intercourses at  
the tables and festivals of profane nations, where  
they might be seduced to idolatry and the worship

Of clean  
and unclean  
beasts and  
the place of  
worship.

(*s*) Exod. xxii. 25.

(*t*) xxv. 35.

(*u*) xxiii. 30.

(*w*) Lev. xi.

**SECT.** of strange gods. This distinction must have answered the intention of the lawgiver; as men would never sit down to table together, when the dish that was delicious to one was odious to the other; and the Jew devoured the animal which the Gentile thought sacred. Ancient idolaters paid the most superstitious veneration to different animals; the Egyptians in particular worshipped oxen, sheep and goats at Memphis, Heliopolis and Mendes; some learned writers are of opinion, that Moses permitted his people to sacrifice and eat certain animals, in order to remove or prevent an opinion of their sanctity; while he prohibited others as unclean, which Heathens used in their sacrifices, and mysteries of religion (x). This lawgiver ordered to kill the animal at the time the Egyptians were worshipping it; to roast the flesh which that people eat raw; to eat the head which they never eat; to dress the entrails which they never dressed, but employed in divination and other purposes of superstition. Nor were the Hebrews separated from idolatrous nations, only by the distinction of meats; but by particularities of dress, language, government, customs, times, places of worship, and even by the situation of the country. The land of Palestine was fortified by nature, and almost inaccessible; which verified Balaam's prediction, "the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations (y)."

(x) Lewis, Book V. Chap. xvi.

(y) Numb. xxiii. 9.  
Heathens

Heathens believed in a multiplicity of gods who <sup>S E C T. II.</sup> presided over woods, rivers, mountains and valleys, and worshipped them in temples built in these places: for the prevention of this idolatrous practice Moses commanded the Israelites to worship God in one place, and to bring burnt offerings and sacrifices, and tithes and heave offerings to the place chosen by the Lord God; and threatened to cut off those who disobeyed this order. The prophet Zephaniah (z) intimates, that when idolatry shall be abolished, the worship of God shall not be confined to Jerusalem, but that it shall be lawful to worship God any where. Ancient patriarchs performed divine worship on hills or mountains, and planted them with trees, that the shade might excite devotion, and the silence of retirement inspire the worshippers with awe and reverence. Ancient Heathens perverted this innocent custom, by worshipping the sun, moon and stars on high places, by consecrating groves to their gods and heroes, and by making these groves scenes of impiety, impurity, and abominable prostitutions. To prevent such impure and idolatrous rites, Moses forbade planting trees near places of worship, commanded his people to destroy all the places, wherein idolatrous nations served their gods, to cut down their groves, and to demolish their altars and high places (a). That groves were prohibited as a preservative against idolatry, is

(z) Chap. ii. 11.

(a) Exod. xxxiv. 13.

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Means employed to procure respect for God.

evident from this, that pious kings afterwards extirpated them, and apostate kings planted them (b).

Every precept, prohibition, rite and custom of the Israelites, their times and places of worship, and the ministers of religion, were all calculated to abolish idolatry and beget a veneration for God and his worship. In former times patriarchs, and heads of families, exercised the ministerial function; and every man offered sacrifice in fields or on tops of mountains to idols or demons. To stop this source of idolatry Moses confined the priesthood to a certain family, who were zealous in punishing idolaters, and who did not spare their own relations; from an aversion to false worship (c). The observance of times was also conducive to the removal of idolatry; it was usual with ancient idolaters, to devote the whole month of September to sacrifices, fasts, and other exercises of devotion; nor can Spencer see any reason why Moses should crowd so many solemnities into one month, or dedicate the same days of this month to the feasts of expiation, trumpets, and tabernacles, but for the removal of idolatry. The feast of New-moons and Passover were celebrated at the times of the Pagan feasts; so that the Jews could not attend to the festivals of the Heathens; nor could any person who knew the sabbath was instituted in memory of the creation, ever worship

(b) Spencer de legibus Heb. Lib. I. Cap. vi.

(c) Ibid. Lib. II. Cap. vi.

the creature instead of the Creator (*d*). The Jewish lawgiver employed various means to inspire a carnal people with respect for God, and his worship. The high-priest alone was admitted into the holy of holies, and that but once a year; no fire was used in sacrifice, but what was taken from the altar (*e*); by the command of God to Moses, a man was stoned for gathering sticks on the sabbath (*f*); and in David's time, the Lord smote Uzza, and put him to death, for inconsiderately touching the ark of the Lord (*g*). Priests were prohibited to drink wine when they entered the tabernacle, or to quit it on any pretence, until the service was performed (*h*). Their dress was to be splendid, to procure them respect; and their fortunes competent to preserve them from contempt. The deformed were excluded from the Hebrew priesthood; as a natural blemish might render their office despicable (*i*), and ministers of religion were forbade to marry a divorced woman, an harlot, or even a widow (*k*). None were allowed to enter the sanctuary, with shoes or unwashed hands, or to turn their backs on it, when going out of the tabernacle. Women after childbirth were prohibited to enter it, until they were purified; and priests and lay Jews, who had any

SECT.  
II.

(*d*) Spencer, Lib. II. Cap. vi.

(*e*) Lev. x. 1.

(*f*) Numb. xv. 36.

(*g*) 2 Sam. vi. 6.

(*h*) Lev. x. 7.

(*i*) Lev. xxi. 16.

(*k*) Lowman's Heb. Ritual, Part II. Chap. iii.

**SECT.** II. uncleanness, were forbade to eat the flesh of sacrifices, on pain of being cut off. Moses employed various other means of restoring the knowledge of the true God, and preventing a relapse into superstition and idolatry. He separated them for forty years in the wilderness from all idolatrous nations; that they might unlearn their prejudices (*l*); destroyed multitudes of them who were incurably obstinate; extirpated the Canaanites and other neighbours who might seduce them to idolatry; and threatened to cut off all who were convicted of such seduction (*m*).

Of the tabernacle and temple.

It was usual with some ancient Heathens, to carry about the images of their gods, to accompany them in their journeys, and to assist them in dangers. Some supposed these images inhabited by their gods, and chained them down in order to secure their residence; and that they might know where to invoke and address them in prayer (*n*). The prophet Amos (*o*) charges the Israelites with carrying the tabernacle of Moloch in the wilderness after the manner of the Egyptians. Moses, to abolish this custom, built a tabernacle or portable temple for the true God; in order to divert his people from that practice of idolaters: no reason can be assigned for confining the divine presence within the narrow limits of a tabernacle, or temple; but a compliance with the narrow con-

(*l*) Spencer, Lib. I. Cap. xii.

(*m*) Deut. xiii. 6. 15.

(*n*) Spencer, Diss. V. Lib. III. Cap. iii.

(*o*) Ch. v. 26.

ceptions of a gross people, who otherwise might think him absent or careless about them. To correct this erroneous opinion; Solomon, after he had built the temple, cried out in the following words, "Shall God dwell on earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, much less this house which I have built." "Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool, says the prophet, where is the house that ye build unto me?" And the apostle says "that Solomon built him an house, howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands (p)." We cannot entertain so unworthy an idea of God, as to suppose that he could be delighted with sumptuous ornaments and costly utensils; and the chief object of the magnificence of the temple, must have been to gratify a carnal people, to inspire a veneration for the Being worshipped there, and to allure them from idolatry, to the worship of the true God (q).

Moses permitted the various sacrifices used among the Gentiles in the worship of their idols, but corrected and reformed them: some he intended as expressions of piety and gratitude to God; some were designed to avert the divine anger; others to expiate offences and purify the heart; and all of them to abolish or remove ido-

*Of sacrifices  
and lustrations.*

(p) Isaiah lxvi. 1. 1 Kings viii. 27. Acts vii. 47.

(q) Spencer, Lib. III. Diss. VI.

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larry (r). Moses no where absolutely commanded sacrifices, but permitted them in compliance with the prejudices of his people ; he knew they would offer sacrifices, and only directs them in the choice of the thing sacrificed (s), and in the object of sacrifices. The prophet Isaiah (t) asks, " Who hath required these things at your hands ? " The Psalmist thinks it impious to suppose that God would be delighted with the blood of bulls or of goats ; St. Paul (u) calls these and other ceremonies of the law " weak and beggarly elements ; " and St. Peter affirms, that spiritual and living sacrifices can alone be acceptable to a God of holiness and purity. It must be admitted, that Abel, Cain, Noah and Abraham, offered sacrifices ; but theirs were spontaneous and not enjoined. Cain offered the fruits of the earth ; and Abel the firstlings of his flocks ; sacrifices both different and voluntary prove that they were not required ; and the prophets, to lessen all confidence in them, affirm that God did not require them, when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt (w). Spencer maintains, that Heathens borrowed sacrifices and other rites from the patriarchs ; and that, in some instances, idolatry was first built on the worship of the true God : that Moses purged these rites of every thing abominable, and changed the object, without en-

(r) Lev. xxiii. Numb. xv. 20. Lev. ii. 14. Numb. viii. 12.

(s) Lev. i. (t) i. 12. (u) Gal. iv. 9. (w) Jerem. vii. 22.

tirely abolishing them. Hence this learned writer S E C T.  
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deduces the similitude of some Pagan and Mosaic rites; and affirms, that this similitude was pleasing to the Israelites; while the smallest marks of distinction were as offensive to Heathens as rites diametrically opposite; since no sects are so averse from each other, as those which differ least, in doctrine and worship (x). Gentiles practised ablutions and purgations, and imagined that water, especially salt water, washed away stains from the soul as well as from the body: and Spencer can see no reason for this and other useless rites but to divert the Israelites from false worship, to the worship of the true God. The Jewish lawgiver altered and improved these rites, changed the object of them, and made them essentially distinct, while they agreed in some respects. His lustrations were simple and free from pomp, and intended to cleanse the flesh from pollutions and impurities, while those of the Heathens abounded with magical and superstitious ceremonies (y). Hence it is evident, that the Hebrew legislator transfused into divine worship several rites, but carefully corrected them; and rejected every impurity, so as to convert superstition into religion, and lead men from idolatry to the worship of the true God.

(x) Spencer, Lib. III. Diff. II.

(y) Ibid. Diff. III. p. 992.

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Tendency  
of the theo-  
cracy and  
of temporal  
sanctions.

The theocratical form of government, and temporal sanctions established among the Hebrews, tended to remove superstition and preserve them from Gentilism and the worship of idols. Their Jehovah was invested with a double authority of God and civil magistrate; and they who refused to serve him as God, thought themselves bound to obey him as king. All idolaters were considered as rebels; and several were restrained from idolatry by a threat denounced against those who were guilty of that crime (z). But an invisible king, and a theocracy appeared despicable in the eyes of a carnal people, who were accustomed to, and captivated with, all the splendor of royalty. Jehovah, it is true, appointed judges as his vice-roys to direct both religious and civil affairs; but the Israelites rejected this form of government, and demanded a king who might be more indulgent to their prejudices; and denied the divine as well as political authority of their God Jehovah. Here it must be observed, that almost all the judges appointed by God were religious and good men; almost all the kings appointed by men themselves were idolatrous and tyrannical: the government of the former was mild and gentle; while under kings, they were oppressed and enslaved, as Samuel (a) forewarned them. God promised the Israelites frequently, and solemnly, a numerous

(z) Deut. Ch. xiii.

(a) 1 Sam. viii. 11.

offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey, S E C T.  
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long life and victory over their enemies, on condition of obedience; but threatens plague, famine, disease, death and defeats to those who violated his statutes. The Mosaic sanctions were accommodated to the genius of a rude, and earthly minded people, attentive only to present objects, and unlikely to be influenced by spiritual and distant considerations. The ancient Gentiles entertained an opinion, that no success was to be expected in war or agriculture, without the favour of idols or demons; and that all unprosperous events were to be imputed to their anger, when they were neglected or disregarded. The sacrifices of Pagans were intended to appease or suspend the anger of their deities; their festivals to render them propitious to their fields and orchards; or to express their gratitude for a plenteous harvest. Since then the acquisition of temporal benefits was the object of Gentile worship; it was necessary that Moses should promise temporal advantages to the observers of his laws, and threaten severe punishments to those, who implored the aid of any strange god. Temporal rewards and punishments offered by Moses, had a direct tendency to subvert the very foundation of idolatry; as he promised to bestow the blessings which they expected from their idols; and to avert the evils which they apprehended from them (b).

(b) Spencer, Lib. I. Cap. iii,

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## II.

Effects of  
those sanc-  
tions in the  
time of  
judges.

Balaam's advice to the Moabites proves, that peace and prosperity would necessarily attend the Israelites, whilst they were obedient to God's laws. The Moabites and Midianites having solicited Balaam to curse the Israelites, the prophet refused to curse those whom God hath blessed, but suggested the means of withdrawing the divine favour from them. Balaam advised the princes of Midian to send some beautiful females into the camp of the Israelites, in order to seduce them from the worship of the true God. The stratagem succeeded; the children of Israel, smitten with the charms of those fair idolatresses, were admitted to their embraces (c), bowed down to their gods, and were sorely oppressed by Midian. Joshua and his contemporaries, who had seen the miracles of Moses, served the Lord while they lived; but the next generation fell into idolatry, and were delivered by God into the hands of their enemies. Though rescued by the judges, they served other gods; and were sold into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, who kept them in bondage eight years (d). When they cried unto the Lord and repented, they were delivered by Othniel who defeated that prince (e): having apostatized they served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years, and were rescued from this second servitude by Ehud, when they had repented of their apostacy (f). They soon

(c) Numb. xxv. 1.

(d) Judges Ch. iii.

(e) Judges iii. 10.

(f) Judges iii.

relapsed

relapsed into idolatry, and were sold into the <sup>SECT.</sup> hands of Jabin, who oppressed them severely for <sup>II.</sup> twenty years; Deborah released them from this third servitude, and God made two women chief instruments of their deliverance (*g*). Having forgot this act of mercy, they were delivered into the hands of Midian, and groaned under a more severe bondage than they had hitherto experienced; but when they cried unto the Lord, they were miraculously delivered by Gideon, who broke his father's idols and sacrificed to the true God (*h*). At Gideon's death, they relapsed into idolatry, and were sold into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites for eighteen years (*i*); but were emancipated by Jephthah, from this fifth servitude, after they had sincerely repented (*k*). The Israelites again did evil in the sight of the Lord, in the administration of Eli; and were delivered into the hands of the Philistines, for the space of forty years. The sons of Eli committed the greatest abominations, and even debauched women at the door of the tabernacle; for which crime Eli was deprived of the high-priesthood, and his sons were cut off in one day (*l*). Samuel, who succeeded him as judge, assembled the people, and exhorted them to put away strange gods, and repent of their transgressions: having expressed solemnly all the marks of a lively repentance, God

(*g*) Judges Ch. iv.  
Ch. x.

(*h*) Judges Ch. vi.

(*i*) Judges

(*k*) Judges Ch. xi.

(*l*) 1 Sam. iv. 17.

destroyed

**SECT.** destroyed their enemies by thunder, and put an  
**II.** end, for that time, to their tyranny and oppression (*l*).

Effects of  
 them in the  
 time of  
 kings.

The Israelites, grown weary of the government of judges, demanded a king; Samuel remonstrated against rejecting this form, but finding his remonstrances disregarded, he complied with their demand, and told them, that God gave them a king for the punishment of their offences. David, a man after God's own heart (*m*), for his adherence to his worship, tarnished the brightness of his reign by murder and adultery; and, though a sincere penitent, brought calamities upon himself, his family, and his country, by the commission of these crimes. Were it not too tedious and uninteresting, it might be proved, from the first book of Kings and the second of Chronicles, that temporal rewards and punishments were uniformly dispensed from the reign of David to the Babylonish captivity: that as often as the Hebrews fell into idolatry they were chastised, and restored to obedience by the judgments of God. They were punished for changing the government from judicial to regal, and were frequently delivered into the hands of their enemies; but were as often rescued, as they sincerely repented. This people were not influenced by rewards, nor punishments, absolutely to refrain from idolatry and vice; but their sufferings generally engaged them

(*l*) 1 Sam. Ch. vii.

(*m*) 1 Kings xv. 5.

to repent, and brought them to a sense of duty, <sup>SECT. II.</sup>  
at least for a time. Judith (n) sums up the effects of the obedience and disobedience of the Hebrews, in the following words; “ Whilst they sinned not before God they prospered; because that God who hateth iniquity was with them; but when they departed from the way, which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles, and were led captives into a strange land, and the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities were taken by their enemies.” Such were the effects of the observance or violation of the laws of Moses! effects which accurately corresponded with the promise, and incontrovertibly prove the divine authority of the lawgiver. A short time before his death, Moses renewed the covenant between God and his people, exhorted them to obedience, and promised that they should be delivered from captivity, dispersion, or other calamity, on sincere repentance. This prediction was verified in the time of judges and kings; and we see the good effects of the divine judgments after the Babylonish captivity. A servitude of seventy years, in a strange country, at length-cured them of all propensity to idolatry; there they had time to take a retrospect of a series of crimes and idolatries severely punished; saw the predictions of the prophets fulfilled, and never after relapsed into idolatry, terrified by the evils inflicted for

(n) Ch. v.

dis-

**S E C T. II.** disobedience. Hence it appears, that the Mosaic penalties tended to remove superstition, and did actually remove it, at least for a time. A repetition of them had at length the desired effect, of absolutely abolishing superstition, which is the first step towards the worship of the true God. The Jews, to this day, feel the effects of the threats of their lawgiver; since they rejected their Messiah they have been dispersed and persecuted, and never constituted a nation with laws and government of their own, on account of that crime, which they never repented of. For what other offence has their God suffered them to be scattered, and oppressed, for near two thousand years, and not gathered them into their own land, according to the prediction of their lawgiver (o)? The hardships they have endured in that time, might convince them, that they have continued long under the rod of the Almighty, deserted and disowned by the God who poured such benefits on their ancestors, while they were obedient to his laws.

Intention of  
particular  
laws and  
rites of Ju-  
daism.

I proceed now to point out the tendency and use of several Mosaic rites and prohibitions, which seem to have little or no connexion with religion, morals or policy: at these the infidel directs his cavils and objections; he cannot comprehend, why a pure and perfect God should enjoin such a multitude of rites and precepts, that have no moral excellence in them, and which appear to promote

(o) Deut. xxx.

neither

neither the honour of God, nor the advantage of <sup>§ E C T.</sup> his creatures. It cannot be denied, that these <sup>II.</sup> are ideas apt to be suggested, on a superficial view of the Levitical law, and Hebrew ritual; yet if we examine the origin and object of the Mosaic institutions, we shall find that most of them tend to prevent or remove idolatry; that none of them are immoral; that some of them conduce to the advancement of virtue, and that all of them evince the wisdom of the lawgiver, who adapts his laws to the tempers, prejudices, and circumstances of his people. It is difficult to explain the reasons of the Jewish rites and precepts at this distance of time; as many of them allude to customs which prevailed in the days of Moses, and which are now unknown to us, from our ignorance of antiquity. If we can, in many instances, vindicate the wisdom of these laws, for the times when, and the persons to whom they were prescribed; it will appear unreasonable, to condemn them in other cases, where we have not equal evidence of their wisdom and expedience. It will now appear, that some rites and precepts of the law, though unessential in themselves, were extremely useful, and even necessary, for retaining the worship of the true God, preserving the Israelites a distinct people, and for guarding them against the idolatries of surrounding neighbours. Maimonides affirms, that ancient idolaters besmeared their victims with honey, in order to render them palatable

I ble

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ble to their gods and departed heroes: Spencer (*p*) thinks that Moses was induced, by this practice, to prohibit offering honey unto the Lord; lest men should suppose that he was delighted with things acceptable to the Heathen gods. The rite of boiling a kid in its mother's milk was practised by Pagans in the mysteries of their demons; they supposed these demons to be delighted with the broth, and sprinkled their trees, fields and orchards with it, in a magical way, that they might produce plentifully the ensuing year. Moses (*q*) prohibited the custom of seething a kid in its mother's milk; to abolish or prevent this superstitious practice, and not to restrain cruelty, as some commentators have vainly imagined (*r*). Pagan priests wore garments mixed of linen and woollen, to express their gratitude to certain demons, for their benign influence over their flax and sheep; and to secure their protection to their fields and flocks. The lawgiver therefore forbade his people, to wear linen and woollen together; in order to remove the mistake, that his people were indebted for these blessings to stars, or demons. That heterogeneous mixtures of linen and woollen were marks of idolatry, and instruments of superstition, appears from this circumstance; that Hebrew priests and laymen might wear both in the

(*p*) Lib. II. Cap. ix.(*q*) Exod. xii. 5.(*r*) Spencer, Lib. II.

service of the tabernacle or temple, where they ran no risque of falling into idolatry (s). S E C T.  
II.

At Pagan feasts, was exhibited a strange mixture of mirth and sorrow; the Egyptians began theirs in honour of Osiris or Adonis, with expressions of grief and sympathy with Venus for the loss of her gallant: they shaved their heads, lacerated their bodies, and carried his image in solemn procession, in honour of the idol. Solon (t) prohibited the Athenian women to scratch and tear themselves at the interments of their friends; and Baal's prophets cried aloud and cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out (u). Ancient idolaters considered cutting, maiming, and mangling themselves, as a rite acceptable to the infernal gods and to the spirits of the deceased. Moses forbade Israelites to make cuttings in the flesh for the dead, or print marks upon their bodies; for the purpose of abolishing or preventing such idolatrous practices. Ancient Hebrews employed these rites, as expressions of grief, at the funerals of the deceased; and therefore the lawgiver prohibited them, as they favoured of ethnicism, and led to superstition. Ancients in their funeral ceremonies used to cut their hair round, to pluck off their hair or beard, and to strew them on the corpses of the deceased, as acceptable to demons, and to the spirits of the

The same  
subject con-  
tinued.

(s) Spencer, Lib. II. Cap. xxi. Lewis, Book VI. Ch. xxiii.

(t) Plutarch. (u) 1 Kings xviii. 28.

**S E C T.**  
**II.**

departed. To remove such superstitious rites, Moses prohibited the Hebrews to "round the corners of their heads, or mar the corners of their beards (*w*);" it was not simple cutting or shaving their heads or beards that is here forbade; but doing it to appease demons, or to gratify the dead. Even the most scrupulous observers of the law practised these rites at funerals; the prophet Jeremiah exhorts the Hebrews to cut off their hair, and Ezekiel threatens them with baldness in token of grief (*x*). Ancient idolaters offered first fruits to their gods, with tears and wailing; and believed that the souls of departed friends hovered round their sepulchres, and required food for their sustenance (*y*). To prevent or remove such idolatrous customs, Moses commanded the Israelites to declare solemnly, that they devoted first fruits and other offerings to none but pious and charitable uses; "I have not eaten in my mourning, nor taken aught for any unclean use; nor given aught thereof for the dead; but have given to the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and the widow (*z*)."

The same  
subject con-  
tinued.

It was a custom among Phenicians, Babylonians, and other ancient nations, to appoint women for prostitution, in the temples of Venus and Priapus: adjoining these temples they had tents, where persons of both sexes prostituted themselves, in ho-

(*w*) Lev. xix. 27.

(*x*) Ezek. vii. 18.

(*y*) Spencer, Lib. II. Cap. xxiv.

(*z*) Deut. xxvi. 12.

nour of deities, who were supposed to be delighted <sup>SECRET.</sup> with impure acts, performed near their temples, <sup>II.</sup> or in the presence of their idols (*a*). These temples were decorated with obscene figures, of naked Jupiters, Gladiators, and other emblems of strength and lewdness; and one thousand religious prostitutes were solemnly dedicated to such filthy services at Corinth, and maintained in a temple, for the use of sailors who visited that port (*b*). Herodotus assures us, that every Babylonish woman was obliged, once in her life, to prostitute herself to some stranger openly in the temple of Venus; that beautiful women were soon dismissed from the temple; while the deformed waited sometimes for three or four years before they could satisfy the law (*c*). This historian acquaints us, that almost all nations except Egyptians and Grecians, made their temples scenes of debauchery; and that Egyptians were the first, who prohibited abominable impurities in the worship of their gods (*d*). To prevent, or abolish such impure and superstitious rites, Moses prohibited each sex to be concerned in them; "There shall be, saith he, no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor sodomite, or rather whoremaster of the sons of Israel (*e*)."  
That prostitution in honour of their gods, was prohibited by this law, appears from another pro-

(*a*) Strabo, Lib. VIII.

(*b*) Lewis, Book V. Ch. i.

(*c*) Herod. Lib. I.

(*d*) Herod. Lib. II.

(*e*) Deut. xxiii. 17.

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hibition of Moses; "Do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore;" which could only be understood of meretricious acts performed in honour of polluted idols. Baal Peor, an obscene deity, like Priapus, was the chief god of Palestine and Phenicia, whose votaries expressed their gratitude for a numerous offspring, by obscene postures, and by the indecent practice of bruising the breasts of virgins (*f*). Phenician virgins prostituted themselves in the temples of obscene deities, in the presence of their idols; and offered money, or garments obtained by meretricious practices, for the repair of temples, the maintenance of priests, or the purchase of victims (*g*). To abolish or prevent such superstitious and filthy customs, Moses prohibited females to bring the hire of an harlot into the house of the Lord; as it would be a disgrace to the temple, to admit any thing that was unchaste; and God might be supposed pleased with filthy rites, did he accept of the hire of prostitution, as an offering to his temple (*b*). The ancient Egyptians worshipped Anubis, under the form of a dog, and revered this animal, as the emblem of the dog-star: hence, perhaps, Moses was induced to reject from the sanctuary, the price of a dog, and forbids to bring it, as well as the price of a whore, into the house of the Lord;

(*f*) Young on Idol. Corruptions, Vol. II. Chap. i.

(*g*) Athanasius contra Gentes, Cap. xxvi. Edit. Paris, 1698.

(*b*) Spencer, Lib. II. Cap. xxiii.

and for the same reason, namely, because both S E C T.  
II.  
are an abomination unto the Lord. The latter  
part of this verse was intended as a preservative  
against impurity and superstition; and we may  
conclude, that the former part, relative to the  
price of dogs, had a similar intention; especially  
as the word abomination generally expresses God's  
abhorrence of superstition and idolatry (1).

A careful view of the Hebrew ritual might rea-  
dily convince us, that it tended to preserve the  
Hebrews from idolatry, to promote the worship  
of the true God, and to advance men in theolo-  
gical and moral knowledge. Moses prohibited  
many rites, which staggered the weak, and led  
them to, and confirmed them in, idolatry; and  
abolished some customs seemingly innocent, such  
as shaving the head round, eating over blood,  
wearing linen and woollen, &c. as they tended to  
encourage superstition and idolatry among his peo-  
ple. He prohibited not only impure rites, and  
idolatrous worship, but even acts which tended to  
seduce men to idolatry, such as branding their  
bodies, cutting their flesh, planting a grove near  
an altar, setting up an image, erecting painted  
stones, and other acts destitute of moral turpitude,  
and which became criminal, only by being made  
instruments in the worship of false gods. He op-  
posed diametrically some Gentile institutions, to

General  
tendency of  
the Mosaic  
rites, pre-  
cepts, and  
prohibi-  
tions.

(1) Spencer, Lib. II. Cap. xxiii.

S E C T. render the Israelites odious to Pagans ; while he

II.

complied with the prejudices of his own people in trifling instances, that they might not reject his more rigid, severe, and rational doctrines. It is not inconsistent with the sanctity of God to admit into his service, rites made use of in Pagan worship, provided they are improved ; just as a pious king might accept of the honours paid to a tyrant, and as Heathen temples have been converted into Christian churches. It must readily be admitted, that the Jewish legislator repeatedly forbids his people to have any commerce with Gentiles, or to adopt their manners ; but such passages only condemn idolatry, impurity, and every thing that clashes with good morals, and the belief of one God : and ancient Jews admitted several Heathen rites, which did not militate against morality, and the worship of the Deity (*k*). From this slight view of the Hebrew ritual, we may easily judge of its general tendency and design ; even the learned Spencer thinks it impossible, to explain the reasons of all the Jewish institutions, at this distance of time, from our ignorance of antiquity.

The Mosaic  
rites and in-  
stitutions  
local and  
temporary.

It is probable, that Moses adapted his institutions to the genius of an uncultivated people, oppressed in Egypt, children in information, and accustomed to the rites of an idolatrous kingdom. He must have known the absurdity of addressing, or instructing children, as men of mature under-

(*k*) Spencer, Lib. III. Cap. xii.

standing ;

standing ; or peasants and mechanics, as if they S E C T.  
II.  
were learned and refined. He enjoined several rites and precepts unessential in themselves, for the purpose of leading them by degrees, from idolatry to true worship ; just as men employ many years, in learning the rudiments of arts, and reading books, which have no intrinsic value, but as they assist in the acquisition of useful knowledge. To put it beyond all doubt that the Mosaic institutions were intended to fence against or extirpate idolatry, it may suffice to observe ; that converts, who were in no danger of relapsing into Paganism, were excused from observing them. They who dreaded a relapse, were required to observe the whole law, and admitted proselytes of the covenant ; while such as apprehended no danger, and promised to observe the seven precepts of Noah, were admitted proselytes of the gate, and exempted from the observance of the Hebrew ritual. That the laws of Moses were addressed to the Israelites of his own time, and not to those of after ages, appears from this ; that the Jewish prophets, Christ and St. Paul, who acknowledge the divine authority of the lawgiver, censure his New-moons, solemn feasts, and other institutions, as adapted only to a gross and carnal people. St. Paul (*l*) condemns the Galatians, for desiring to be again in bondage to weak and beggarly elements ; and our Saviour (*m*) says, that on the

*(l)* Gal. iv. 10.*(m)* Matt. xxii. 37.

S E C T. II. love of God and our neighbour hang all the law

and the prophets. This assertion of Christ cannot be true, unless these parts of the law, which appear to have no relation to God or man, tend to promote the interest of our neighbour, and to restore idolaters to the worship of God. Moses recommended some rites and precepts diametrically opposite to those of Pagans; while he adopted others, in compliance with the prejudices of his people. The Hebrew lawgiver, knowing that men will not adopt new rites, except they appear in the garb of old, transcribed some profane ones into his worship; but carefully reformed them, and changed their object, from idols and demons to God. Primitive Christians, sensible that prejudices were not to be removed at once, but by slow degrees, retained some Heathen and Jewish rites; and the wisest of the Protestant reformers, while they abolished the most exceptionable doctrines and rites of the Romish church, retained some trifling ones, from a tenderness for the prejudices of some ignorant converts (*n*).

Laws of  
Moses pre-  
ferable to  
those of Pa-  
gan law-  
givers.

The Hebrew ritual was not merely ceremonial, and Voltaire falsely charges it with absurdity and barbarism. We are no more to confine the divine law of the Jews, to rites and ceremonies, than the law of Christians to baptism and the Lord's supper: it does not consist entirely in show and ceremony, in washings and purifications, in offer-

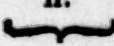
(*n*) Spencer, Diff. I. Cap. i.

ings of birds and beasts, as this and other writers <sup>SECT.</sup> have unfairly represented it. The Mosaic code, <sup>II.</sup> besides a multitude of ceremonies, requires us to believe in one God who created the world, and rules it by his providence; to love and fear him; to be grateful for his goodness, and trust in his mercy; to be just and charitable; and to love our neighbour as ourselves; it prohibits making any likeness of God, and restrains impure and vicious desires. A learned civilian (o) affirms, that if the laws of all other nations, except the Jewish, were put together, they are not to be compared to the old Roman laws in gravity, equity and sufficiency; and yet the Jewish laws, thus distinguished by this author, Voltaire has ignorantly presumed to censure as barbarous and absurd. If we compare Hebrew with Heathen institutions, we shall find the former preferable to the latter, in many particulars. The law forbids men to engage in war but for self-defence, or to obtain satisfaction for injuries; to enter an enemy's country, until restitution was refused; to cut down fruit trees, or commit unnecessary waste or havock of any kind. How humane was the institution of the sabbatical year, which emancipated slaves; and the Jubilee which restored old proprietors to the possessions that they had alienated? In the Mosaic code (p)

(o) Sir Thomas Ridley, Part I. Chap. i. Sect. 1.

(p) Exod. xxii. 21. Lev. xix. 19. Lev. xxiii. 22. Deut. xv. 7, 11. Deut. xxiii. 21. See also Maimonides De jure pauperis & peregrini, Cap. i.

there

**SECT.** there are many pressing exhortations to relieve the  
 II.  poor, the stranger, the fatherless and widow, not to be paralleled in the laws of other ancient kingdoms.—“Thou shalt not vex the stranger, nor oppress him, nor afflict the widow and fatherless child. Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land. When ye reap the harvest, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, nor gather the gleanings of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them to the poor and to the stranger: thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, nor gather every grape; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless and widow; thou shalt remember that thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt.”—Incestuous marriages so common in Egypt, Persia, Arabia, and even Greece, were prohibited by Moses, as contrary to good policy and the source of irregularities in private families (g). Many ancient nations had asylums for the reception of criminals which screened them from magistrates; and Moses appointed cities of refuge for the involuntary manslayer to fly to for shelter, until he was acquitted by the judges; the Mosaic institution was intended as a protection to the innocent only; while the asylums of Greeks and Romans equally protected the innocent and

(g) Jewish Lett. Part III, Lett. IV.

guilty (*r*). In Lacedemon, even the innocent <sup>SECT. II.</sup> annually received a certain number of stripes, as a mark of subjection (*s*), and helots were murdered, to prevent their encrease; while the Jewish code guarded the lives of slaves from the tyranny of masters; and the state from the bad effects of cruelty and oppression. If a master put out the eye or broke the tooth of his slave, he was obliged to emancipate him (*t*); if he struck him with a stick, so that he died of the blow, he was punished or put to death. In the Hebrew republic, a woman, who killed her child, or a father who exposed his new-born infant, would have been treated as murderers; while among Greeks and Romans their laws allowed them to expose infants or put them to death. Romulus required every citizen to preserve all his males and eldest female, and permitted him to destroy his other females, and to expose weak or deformed children (*u*). According to the ancient Roman laws fathers might sell their children for slaves thrice, and had a power of life and death over them, as long as they lived; and Aristotle maintained, that the authority of a father over his children was so absolute, that he could do them no injustice. The old Roman laws allowed a husband to repudiate his

(*r*) Lewis, Book II. Chap. 13.

(*s*) Jewish Lett. Part III. Lett. IV.

(*t*) Exod. xxi. 26.

(*u*) Leland's Christian Revelation, Part II. Chap. x.

wife

**SECT.** <sup>II.</sup> wife for taking his keys; or to put her to death if taken in adultery; whilst the woman had no redress for the infidelity of her husband (*w*). These laws allowed creditors to exercise cruelties on debtors, and prohibited the former to load the latter with a greater weight of chains than fifteen pounds; while the Jewish code enjoins humanity even towards beasts, and forbids killing the young one, under the eye of the dam, or an animal that was pursued and took refuge in their house (*x*). The institutions of Lycurgus were framed for a military republic, and tended rather to render men hardy and brave, than just and benevolent. Aristotle (*y*) observes, that the Lacedemonians flourished in time of war, but declined in seasons of peace, as may naturally be expected from the ordinances of that lawgiver. The Jewish legislator was preferable to the Spartan in the distribution of the land; having confirmed his division by the laws of religion: according to the Mosaic code Jehovah is Lord of the land, the Israelites his vassals, and the lands, held as fiefs from him, remained unalienable in the same families, on condition of obedience (*z*). Plato and Aristotle did not indeed found commonwealths, like Lycurgus and Solon; yet each of them formed one in imagination, and committed it to writing: but while they laboured to shew the excellence of their

(*w*) Jewish Lett. Part III. Lett. IV.

(*x*) Deut. xxiii.

(*y*) Pol. ii. 7.

(*z*) Jewish Lett. Part III. Lett. II. Sect. 4.

genius,

genius, and the perfection of human policy, they <sup>SECT.</sup> proved incontrovertibly the weakness and imper-<sub>II.</sub>fection of both. Plato ordained, that there should be a community of wives, among the citizens of his republic: according to which plan, all women would be common to all men; incestuous copulations must often take place; and the virtues of chastity and fidelity, as well as parental, filial, and conjugal affection, would exist but in idea. Lycurgus commanded young girls to dance naked among boys; while Plato required women, in the flower of youth, to dance, ride, wrestle, and perform all exercises naked, among young men who also wore no cloaths. It was in vain to enjoin continence to either sex, while the laws allowed a view of naked persons of each sex, which tended to kindle lust in the males, and to deprive females of that modesty which is so great a preservative of the chastity of women (a). Plato commands women to procure abortions, and to expose their children in certain cases; applauds unnatural and obscene love; acquits a man by law who killed his own slave, and requires him only to pay a fine, who killed the slave of another. If a person killed a freeman in anger, he was banished for two years; if deliberately he was punished with three years exile. Aristotle, who undertook to censure Plato, and other lawgivers, was also defective in his laws, for the reformation of manners, and the

(a) Hackwell's Apology, Book IV. Chap. ii. Sect. 3.

**SECT.** good of the commonwealth. If a man had as  
 II. many children as he could maintain, Aristotle ordered his wife to procure abortion, and parents to expose weak or deformed children (*b*). These laws tended to render men cruel and inhuman; since, as Lactantius (*c*) observes, it could not be expected, that he should spare other mens children, who spared not his own. Aristotle prohibited lascivious pictures, lest young persons should be corrupted by the sight of them; but excepted the images of certain gods in whom custom allowed licentiousness: how absurd, says Lactantius, to take away all other wanton representations, whilst he allowed the lascivious pictures of the gods, which corrupt much more?

Mosaic  
 writings of  
 divine au-  
 thority.

We shall not be surpris'd at the superior excellence of the Mosaic laws, when we consider, that the author of them was commissioned by God. The following considerations ought fully to acquit this lawgiver of all suspicion of fraud and imposture: it would have been impossible for him to have deceived the Israelites by pretended miracles, and equally impossible for any other person after him, to deceive a whole nation. The lawgiver relates miracles said to have been wrought publicly, in the sight of Israelites and Egyptians, and which every man would have rejected had they not been performed; at least, it could not be expected, that a whole nation would unani-

(*b*) Arist. Pol. vii. 16.

(*c*) Lib. VI. Cap. xx.

mously agree in such an imposture. Nor could a SECT.  
II. forgery be imposed on the Jews at any subsequent period ; since men who were continually rebelling, and disposed to deny the divine authority of Moses, would naturally have said of his miracles, These are marvellous things, but we never heard of them before. Would a rebellious and stiff-necked people submit to circumcision, or expensive sacrifices ; or consecrate to God the first fruits of their ground, and the first-born of their cattle ; had they not believed those laws divine, and been eye-witnesses of the miracles wrought to confirm them ? The Hebrew festivals are standing monuments of the reality of these miracles ; the wisdom of proverbs far transcending Heathen morality in brevity and clearness ; the harmony of the inspired writers, and the accomplishment of prophecies, prove those books to be of divine authority. This lawgiver required the lands to rest every seventh year, and promised that every sixth year should produce abundantly for two years : had not his divine commission enabled him to fulfil this promise, his people must have been starved and his imposture detected. They who doubt or deny his divine authority, allow him to be a wise lawgiver ; and is it to be supposed that such a man would weaken the authority of a wise code, by blending it with an account of miracles, which every man knew had never been performed ? Moses describes the faults as well as virtues of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

K

and

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II.

and other heroes of his history ; conceals not the envy and murmuring of his sister Miriam, the idolatry of his brother, nor disguises his own unadvised thoughts which none but God and himself could know. He was modest and free from vanity, and though he commanded armies, and obtained victories, he observes a total silence about his own grandeur and exploits. He settled the office of high-priest in his brother's family, and left not his own children any office of honour or emolument, but that of simple Levites ; while he appointed Joshua to conduct the Israelites into the promised land (*d*). Some think it impossible to resist the evidence of miracles, and cannot believe that the Israelites would have worshipped idols, had they seen the wonders related by Moses. But miracles do not absolutely determine the will ; and we have the testimony of a philosopher, that he himself would have resisted them though he had seen them with his eyes. " Make the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, or raise the dead, says he, and I shall not be shaken by this." Such was the opinion of this free-thinker relative to miracles ; while others of his fraternity differ from him, and maintain the impossibility of resisting their force (*e*) !

Temporal  
functions  
prove his  
divine com-  
mission.

A cursory view of the Jewish history, while it convinces us, that obedience was attended with rewards, and disobedience with punishments, proves

(*d*) Philo de vita Mosi, and Joseph. Antiq. Lib. II. Cap. v.

(*e*) Jewish Lett. VI.

at the same time the divine authority of Moses, <sup>SECT. II,</sup> and the influence of his promises and threats on the condition of his people. Of all institutions none so strongly marks the divine legislator as temporal sanctions: in the course of this world, rewards and punishments are not uniformly dispensed, according to the merits or demerits of individuals or nations; there is not an inseparable connexion between obedience and rewards, disobedience and punishments in this life. All other lawgivers have employed future sanctions to excite men to the observance of their laws and ordinances: but Moses accommodated his to the tempers and capacities of his people. He promised to reward or punish, with national prosperity or national judgments, the observance or violation of his laws, and his promises were performed; nor could any, except a divine lawgiver, fulfil such promises. It has been proved, in the preceding section, that other lawgivers could not reward obedience to their laws; that their power extended only to the punishment of individuals, and not to the chastisement of a whole people, who became vicious and disobedient: this was that privilege of the Jewish lawgiver which distinguished him from all other legislators, and proved his commission from God and his wisdom from heaven (*f*). The Israelites could not be strangers to future

(*f*) Warburton's divine Legation, *passim*.

SECT. II. sanctions from Abraham and the patriarchs (g); nor did Moses inculcate them to enforce obedience to his political institutions; but employed those, which were more likely to operate on a sensual people, affected only by present objects. He knew, that men who were not kept within the bounds of duty by present rewards and punishments, would be little influenced by those that are future and remote.

The truth  
of his ac-  
count con-  
firmed by  
Bryant.

A learned and ingenious writer maintains, that Janus, Saturn, Orus, Poseidon, Zeuth, Osiris, Prometheus, and other names of Heathen gods and heroes, were different titles of Noah, and that the mythology of these is nearly the same with the history of that patriarch, as related by Moses. He proves that several Pagan fables referred to Noah, the ark and deluge; and deduces the certainty of this event, from several vestiges of it to be traced in the mythology of the ancients. According to this writer, Isis, Rhea, Atargatis, were emblems of the ark, and an ark or ship was employed in the rites of Isis and Osiris, in the Dionusia, and other festivals celebrated by Pagans. The dove, that announced the subsidence of the waters, was held sacred by many nations; while the raven, which disappointed their hopes, was generally esteemed a bird of ill omen. The bow, that token of covenant between God and man, according to the Mosaic account, was revered for many ages;

(g) Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, Sect. 3.

and

and we find this token and covenant referred to <sup>SECT.</sup> <sup>II.</sup> by Hesiod, Homer, Parmenides, and other ancient writers (*h*). Hesiod (*i*) alludes to this covenant, and calls it the great oath, and affirms, that this oath was iris or the rainbow, to which the deity appealed, when any of the inferior deities were guilty of a falsehood. Homer (*k*) compares the colours in Agamemnon's cuirass to those of the iris, and affirms it was placed in the heavens as a sign to mankind.

—κατερθ' ἱρίσιν εἰκοτες ἄς τε Κρονίων  
 Εν νεφεῖ σπριξε τερας μεροπων ανθρωπων.

Jove's wondrous bow of three celestial dyes,  
 Plac'd as a sign to man amid the skies.

Homer (*l*) speaks of this phenomenon nearly in the same manner in other passages of his works. Hence we may conclude, that Pagans borrowed from Moses, or derived from one source those rites, customs and opinions, which resembled each other, and were common to all nations. The latter was the opinion of Bryant, who maintains, that this similarity subsisted universally in the most ancient nations, and argues from thence for the truth of the Mosaic account. This learned writer contends, that a resemblance prevailing universally

(*h*) Bryant's Mythology, Vol. II. 4to. p. 349.

(*i*) Theog. V. 780.

(*k*) Iliad, xi. 27.

(*l*) Iliad, xvii. 547, and Hymn to Selene, quoted by Bryant, *ibid*,

S E C T. between Pagan fables, and the plain narrative of

II.

Moses, proves incontrovertibly the truth of the latter ; since if originally false, it would not have been so widely diffused ; and ancient nations would not have agreed with it, and with each other, in so many particulars.

Judaism  
imperfect.

From what has been said of the divine commission of Moses, we might naturally expect, that Judaism should be a perfect code, to all the purposes of religion and morals ; and would not be disappointed in our expectations. The Mosaic law, though imperfect in itself, was perfect in its kind, had the perfection intended by its author, and answered the purposes for which it was designed. Even the most exceptionable parts of the law tended to divert men from the worship of false gods, to separate them from idolatrous nations who were likely to seduce them, and reminded them of their obligations to the true God. The prevention of idolatry was its grand object ; but when that end was attained, the ritual part was repealed, and the moral part, including the worship of God in spirit and in truth, was retained and insisted upon. The Hebrew code was not intended for all mankind, but for this people ; not as a perfect law, but as a means to a more perfect ; not to last for ever, but to the coming of the Messiah. Rites unnecessary for the first two thousand years of the world, and abolished at Christ's appearance, must have been local and temporary ;

temporary ; nor was the Hebrew ritual sufficiently S E C T.  
II.  
general, to oblige all mankind : it does not mention a covenant between God and mankind, but between God and the Israelites, and requires duties, which none but Israelites could perform, with convenience or propriety ; such as repairing thrice a year, to particular places appointed for God's worship, and the celebration of feasts, in commemoration of benefits conferred on that people. Even the decalogue was addressed to this people, and to them only ; as appears from the preamble ; " Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The rewards and punishments of the Mosaic laws were prosperity or adversity in the land of Canaan ; which sanctions were applicable to the Jews only, and could not extend to the rest of mankind. For these reasons, the Hebrew revelation was not intended for the mass of mankind, who could not observe its laws, nor be influenced by its sanctions. But the law was not only local and temporary, but likewise defective in many other particulars : it rigourously commanded the observance of times, places, sacrifices, oblations and corporal purgations ; while it enforced but feebly the duties of justice, charity, purity of heart, patience, temperance, and other virtues. Its encouragements to virtue, and restraints on vice, were not sufficiently strong ; it is doubtful whether it even mentions a future state ; it is cer-

SECT.  
II.

tain it is not clear upon the subject. The law promises no supernatural aid to enable men to conquer the frailties of their nature, and to free them from the bondage of sin and corruption; and offers to transgressors no hope of pardon and mercy, these strong motives to amendment and preventives of despair. The law does not hint at the plan of redemption, except perhaps by types; and is silent on the different kinds of worship, such as praise, thanksgiving, confession and prayer (*l*). So imperfect a revelation could not have been perpetual; "had the first covenant been faultless, there would have been no place found for the second," as the apostle (*m*) expresses it. But the Hebrew code was perfected and all its defects were remedied, by the Christian dispensation, which added some parts that were of eternal obligation, as will appear in the next section.

Judaism  
prepared  
men for the  
gospel.

But Judaism tended not only to abolish superstition, but contributed to the reception of Christianity in the world. The Mosaic and prophetic writings prepared the Jews for Christ's coming, and disposed them to admit him as their Messiah, when the predictions concerning him were so exactly fulfilled. One great effect of the Jewish code was, to shew the connexion between the Hebrew and Christian dispensations, and to serve as a preparative to a more perfect scheme of religion. Moses, and other sacred writers, point expressly at a

(*l*) Barrow's Serm. XV.

(*m*) Heb. viii.

Messiah,

Messiah, to rescue men from sin and superstition; <sup>S E C T. II.</sup> the law and the prophets may be considered as an introduction to Christianity; the Jewish ritual, though weak and imperfect in itself, suited the circumstances of the Hebrews, and disposed men to receive that better religion, which was to be revealed, at the coming of the Messiah. The ritual prepared the Jews for the alterations which were to take place at Christ's appearance, and the apostles proved from the law and the prophets that Christ was the Messiah. The apostles repeatedly explained ritual expressions in a figurative way, considered some Mosaic rites as types, and urged them as arguments that Christ was the Messiah. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, employed Jewish rites, to elucidate and confirm the doctrines of Christianity: and since the ritual answered the purpose of enforcing the truth of the gospel, this was possibly one of its designs: especially, as the same prophetic spirit, which at first devised rites, as useful in a literal sense, might have had a view to the use of them in future times (n).

The Hebrew writings were not only useful, in preventing idolatry and preparing men for the gospel; but in supplying defects in the chronology of the ancients, in directing naturalists in their researches, and in furnishing some Pagans with refined ideas of the attributes of God. Without

(n) Lowman's Hebrew Ritual, Part III. Chap. iii.

SECT.  
II.

the sacred records, we should have no exact account of time from the creation, to near the Christian æra, and Newton employs them in his chronology as supplements to profane history, which was so defective without them. A learned Heathen was of opinion, that if men knew the origin of the world they should calculate from thence; Varro divides time into uncertain, fabulous and historical: from the creation to the flood uncertain; from the flood to the first olympiad fabulous; and from thence to his own time historical (a). The æra of the olympiads commenced above three thousand years after the creation; of which period we have no historical account, which can be relied on, except from the scriptures. Without this source of information, we must be ignorant of ancient history from the creation to the beginning of the Persian empire; a period little less than three thousand years. Herodotus wrote about the time of Xerxes; Thucydides and Xenophon long after this period: nor is there any profane history extant, except some dubious fragments, but what was written after the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. Profane histories furnish no true narratives of events prior to this deliverance, and to the beginning of the Persian empire, as I have already observed. The books of Berosus the Chaldean, Manetho the Egyptian, Sanchoniathon the Pheni-

(a) Censorinus de Die Natali, Cap. xxi.

cian, and Megasthenes the Indian, are either lost <sup>SECT. II.</sup> or counterfeit; and though authentic, were written in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus. "There is nothing, says Julius Africanus, quoted by Eusebius (*p*), accurately written in history by the Greeks before the olympiads; all things said to have happened before that time are confused and incoherent." Thucydides (*q*) begins his history with the Peloponnesian war; because matters preceding that period were known only by conjecture: and Plutarch (*r*) goes no farther back than Theseus; all before his time being but fable and fiction. The annals of the Romans previous to the burning of Rome by the Gauls were lost at that time; and as to the Scythians and other Barbarians, we know little of them, except from the Greeks and Romans, whose accounts are so frequently blended with fable and falsehood.

We may judge of the excellence of the Mosaic system from the inconveniences which have resulted from ignorance, disbelief, or neglect of it. The Hebrew lawgiver affirms, that God created the earth, sea, birds, beasts and fishes for the convenience of mankind: had naturalists embraced this account, and exercised their talents in discovering the laws which prevail in the system, instead of creating worlds out of their own imagina-

Mosaic account of the creation tends to remove some errors of naturalists.

(*p*) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. X. Cap. x.

(*q*) De Bello Pelop. Lib. I.

(*r*) Life of Theseus.

**S E C T.** tions, their time might have been usefully employ-  
**II.** ed ; whereas, by deviating from this account, we  
 find nothing but errors and absurdities among poets  
 and philosophers. Aristotle, Epicurus, Gassendus,  
 Des Cartes, and other materialists, ascribe every  
 thing to matter and motion, and see no necessity  
 for the divine interposition in the fabric of the  
 universe ; whereas if they had followed the Mosaic  
 account they might have been more successful in  
 their theories ; and have seen in the contempla-  
 tion of the world manifold instances of the power,  
 wisdom and goodness of God (*s*). Those who  
 wish to be acquainted with the fictions of philo-  
 sophers, concerning the structure of the heavens  
 and the earth, I refer to a learned writer (*t*), who  
 exhibits their different whims, relative to the chaos  
 and primitive matter. Moses, on the contrary,  
 does not suppose a world made without a God, nor  
 material beings transformed into spiritual, by their  
 own power, nor beings to exist which never exist-  
 ed, such as fauns, nymphs, &c. : his scheme, though  
 grand and majestic, is yet simple ; not contrary to  
 reason or experience ; unlike the absurd and con-  
 fused accounts of the cosmogonies of the Pagans (*u*).  
 Newton, by agreeing with the inspired writer con-  
 cerning the production of the several elements,

(*s*) See Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation—Galen de Usu  
 Part.—Derham's Physico-theology—and Boyle on final Causes.

(*t*) Le Pluche's Hist. of Heavens, Book II.

(*u*) Winder's Hist. of Knowledge, Vol. II. Chap. viii.

and the motion and organization of the whole, SECT. II. has devised a theory which will last for ever; while the systems of fantastic writers are forgotten or disregarded. This prince of philosophers, by adopting the Mosaic account, has investigated the laws which prevail in our system, and proved them the best that could possibly have been contrived; thus exerting his abilities, to the glory of God and good of man, and not employing them against his Creator, like some ancient and modern unbelievers.

In order to prove, that Heathens borrowed the- Jews and their tenets known to ancient Pagans. ological information from Hebrews, it will be necessary to shew, that some Pagan historians, philosophers, lawgivers and poets, had opportunities of being acquainted with the writings of the Jews, or with the people themselves. We have the testimony of Aristobulus, that the books of Moses were translated into Greek before Alexander the Great; nor can we entertain a doubt, that the works of Moses and the prophets were known to Heathens before they were translated. Demetrius Phalereus, a peripatetic, wrote in praise of the Old Testament, and persuaded Ptolemy Philadelphus to employ seventy-two learned men to translate it from the Hebrew into the Greek tongue. The Jews were well known to the Greeks at the time of Xerxes; since Cherillus, who was more ancient than Herodotus, says, that they assisted  
that

SECT. that prince in his expedition against Greece (*w*).

II.

Josephus (*x*) assures us, that when Ptolemy Euergetes took possession of Syria by force, he did not sacrifice to the Egyptian gods for his victory, but went to Jerusalem, and offered sacrifice to God, according to the custom of the Hebrews. This historian (*y*) proves, by various other arguments, that the Greeks were known to the Jews, and might have learned from them their doctrines and practices. Agatharchides derides the Jews for resting on every seventh day from war, agriculture and commerce: and Theophilus, Theodotus, Mnaseas, Aristophanes, Euhemerus, Conon, Zopyrion, and other Greek writers, make mention of the Jews, though guilty of mistakes concerning them, for want of an accurate knowledge of the sacred writings (*z*). The Jews, by their traffic with the Phenicians, might have become known to the Greeks (*a*); and their several captivities must have disseminated their tenets among Heathen nations. Their impatience under servitude might have induced some captives to fly to other countries; while the singularity of their customs must have excited the curiosity of their masters, to enquire into the doctrines of a people, who were proud of being favourites of heaven, even while

(*w*) Joseph. contra Ap. Lib. I. Sect. 22.

(*x*) Ibid.

Lib. II. Sect. 5.

(*y*) Ibid. Lib. I. Sect. 22.

(*z*) Ibid. Sect. 22.

(*a*) Ibid.

they

they laboured under oppression. The Chaldeans SECT. II. might have learned the Hebrew theology, during the seventy years in which the Jews were captives in Babylon: when Daniel had interpreted the king's dream, the king made him ruler of the province of Babylon, and cried out, "Your God is a God of gods, a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets (*b*).<sup>II.</sup>" The most learned and curious had opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of the Hebrew doctrines from this chief president; nor could any man be ashamed of learning from a prime minister, as Winder (*c*) expresses it. A friendship and intercourse having subsisted for a time, between the Egyptians and Jews, by Solomon's marriage to an Egyptian princess, and by the commerce which was carried on between the two nations, it is probable, that the Egyptians borrowed from the Hebrews, though they did not acknowledge the favour. The friendship between the two countries was of short continuance; and we are not to suppose, that Egyptians, who valued themselves on knowledge, would own their obligations to the Hebrews, after they had quarrelled with that people (*d*). Diodorus Siculus maintains, that Orpheus, Museus, Melampus, Dedalus, Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, Pythagoras, Thales, Eudoxus, Democritus, and other

(*b*) Daniel ii.  
Ch. vii. Sect. 3.

(*c*) Hist. of Knowledge, Vol. II.  
(*d*) Ibid.

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famous men, visited Egypt, in order to converse with the priests and learn their mysteries (*e*). Pythagoras resided twenty-two years in that country, submitted to be circumcised, in order to be initiated in their religious mysteries, and expressed himself in the symbolic manner in use among the Egyptians (*f*). Can it then be supposed, that a man who travelled for information, and endured so dangerous and painful an operation, in quest of knowledge, would miss any opportunity of seeking for it, wherever it could be found? Inquisitive Heathens had opportunities of learning, at least through the Egyptians, any knowledge possessed by the Hebrews; and it seems probable, that they availed themselves of these opportunities. Not only Jews and Christians, but also Pagans; not only divines and ecclesiastics, but laymen and lawyers have maintained, that the ancient Pagan philosophers were indebted to the Jews, for some sublime ideas of God; while others as warmly contend, that they derived their knowledge of these things from reason, or tradition from the patriarchs.

Hebrews  
and Heathens relate  
the same  
facts.

Egyptian, Phenician and Chaldean authors testify, that the first men lived long; and the ingenious author of the History of Knowledge proves, that in the accounts of Diodorus Siculus, Berosus and Sanchoniathon, are to be found some traces

(*e*) Steuchus de Perenni Philosophia, Lib. VII. Cap. viii.

(*f*) Ibid.

of the Mosaic history of the creation, though SECT.  
II. their accounts are far inferior to that of Moses, in evidence and simplicity. Berosus a Chaldean, affirms, that many fled to the top of a mountain in Armenia, at the time of the deluge; and Abidienus assures us, that Siffithrus fled to Armenia in a ship, and was overtaken by a flood; that, after it had subsided, birds being repeatedly sent out returned, the third time, with feet marked with mud (*g*). Moses writes of the tower of Babel and the confusion of languages; and Pagan authors report, that giants built a lofty tower for ascending into heaven; that the gods in anger demolished this tower, and confounded the language of the builders (*h*). So great was the resemblance of the Mosaic and fabulous account in this instance, that Celsus (*i*) maintained the former to have been borrowed from the fable of the Aloidæ, related by Homer; though Moses was many centuries prior to that poet. Diodorus, Strabo, Tacitus, Pliny and Solinus, relate the fire of Sodom (*k*); and Celsus (*l*) was of opinion, that the punishment inflicted on Sodom and Gomorrah was taken from the history of Phaeton, as related by the poets. Lucian affirms, that there was a very ancient history at Hierapolis of men

(*g*) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. IX. Cap. iii.

(*h*) Ibid.

(*i*) Origenes contra Celsum, Lib. IV.

(*k*) Grotius

de Veritate Religionis Christianæ, Lib. I. Sect. 16.

(*l*) Origenes contra Celsum, Lib. IV.

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and animals preserved in an ark (*m*); and Melchizedek, quoted by Eusebius, assures us, that in three generations after the flood, Abraham was born and had a son Isaac, whom he attempted to sacrifice; but that a ram, having suddenly appeared, was substituted in his place (*n*). Alexander relates the flight of Jacob, to escape the resentment of his brother Esau, and his leaving his father Isaac one hundred and thirty-seven years old; the selling of Joseph into Egypt, his interpretation of the king's dream, and his emancipation and grandeur (*o*). We have the testimony of Eusebius, that in the writings of Theodotus and Artapanus, was to be found the account of Joseph and his brethren, as related by Moses (*p*). The conformity of sacred and profane history, while it confirms the truth of the former, proves that Hebrews and Heathens borrowed from the same source: or, that the latter were indebted to the former, for facts related by each. Moses and Pagan authors might have derived their accounts of the flood, ark, confusion of languages, and fire of Sodom, from tradition; but the latter, probably, received their accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, from an acquaintance with the Mosaic writings, or with the Hebrews themselves.

(*m*) Grotius *ibid.*(*n*) *Præp. Evang. Lib. IX. Cap. iv.*(*o*) *Ibid.*(*p*) *Ibid.*

Plato and other Pagan philosophers probably SECT. II. borrowed from the Mosaic and prophetic writings, refined ideas of God and his attributes: and this sage might have learned these ideas, from some Hebrews who resided in Egypt, when banished from their country. This philosopher asserts, that mankind are without excuse, to whom was manifested the spiritual and eternal nature of God from the creation of the world. The words of Moses, "I am that I am," and "I am, hath sent me unto you," possibly suggested to Plato an idea of the eternity and self-existence of God; and induced him to describe a being, which cannot be said to have existed in time past, nor to exist in future, but only at the present (*q*). The Hebrew lawgiver affirms, that God made man in his likeness; and Plato, as if he had seen the passage, observes, that man can resemble God only in that part which is spiritual (*r*). Moses affirms, that the sun, moon, and stars, were created for signs and seasons; Plato maintains the same opinion; and asserts, that originally God fed men without labour, and that they wore no cloaths; in allusion to the primitive state of man in paradise (*s*). From the Mosaic account of Eve and the serpent we may probably derive Plato's assertion, that they who lived in Saturn's time, conversed not

Plato borrowed from Hebrews.

(*q*) *Præp. Evang. Lib. XI. Cap. vi.*  
*Cap. xv. and xvi.*

(*r*) *Ibid.*

(*s*) *Ibid. Lib. XII. Cap. viii.*

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only with men but with beasts (*t*). Moses describes the deluge, and the virtues and crimes of the most famous men before and after it: Plato observes the same order in his writings, and mentions the destruction wrought by the deluge, and the few who had escaped, on the tops of mountains, to people the earth, together with the lives of those who lived after it (*u*). "Give me neither poverty nor riches," says Solomon (*w*); and Plato banishes both these extremes from his republic, as dangerous to communities. The wise man, in his proverbs, enjoins us to call no man happy, before he die; and Plato, in his seventh book of Laws, objects to praising men, before we see an end of their works. Moses prohibited an Israelite to serve an Israelite, and if an Israelite forfeited his liberty, he emancipated him every seventh year: Plato gave a similar prohibition, and forbade children to suffer for the crimes of their parents (*x*). The Hebrew lawgiver ordered a man who stole a beast and killed it, to restore four-fold, and two-fold, if it be found alive; but Plato requires in all cases a two-fold restitution. This philosopher divided the citizens of his republic into twelve tribes, and the land into twelve portions (*y*); and required them to build their

(*t*) Præp. Evang. Cap. ix.

(*u*) Ibid. Cap. x.

(*w*) Prov. xxx. 8.

(*x*) Præp. Evang. Lib. XII.

Cap. xxiv.

(*y*) Ibid. Cap. xxv.

metropolis ten miles from the sea, with no other <sup>SECT. II.</sup> city too near it, lest they should be corrupted by the customs of neighbours or foreigners (z). Plato asserts, that God directs all human affairs, and sees, hears, and knows all things; and whether you descend to the depths of the earth, or fly up into heaven, nothing can escape his wisdom and knowledge: this passage was evidently borrowed from a sublime passage in the psalms, which asserts the providence and omnipresence of God (a). The psalmist affirms, that God is unchangeable, and always the same; and Plato expels from his commonwealth, those who think otherwise (b). Moses affirms, that the earth was originally without form and void; Plato makes unformed matter one of the elements of all things (c); and Ovid (d) assures us, that all, at first, was a rude and undigested heap, until God separated jarring elements, and appointed to each its peculiar function. In some of these instances, Plato does not adhere strictly to the sentiments of the sacred writings; but alters and disguises them, perhaps to conceal his theft, and sometimes perhaps errs, from ignorance of the scriptures. Justin Martyr asks, from whence, except from holy writ, could Plato have learned that Jove was carried in the

(z) Præp. Evang. Cap. xxvii.

(a) Ibid. Cap. xxviii.

(b) Ibid. Lib. XIII. Cap. iv.

(c) Ibid. Cap. vii.

(d) Metam. Lib. I.

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heavens in his quick chariot? an idea that might have been suggested by the words of the prophet Ezekiel (*e*); "The glory of the Lord ascended on the cherubims, and the cherubims lifted up their wings, and the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them."—That Plato borrowed from the Hebrews, appears also from the testimony of Numenius, a Pythagorean, who said of Plato, that he was no other but Moses speaking in the Attic language (*f*): and from Philoponus (*g*), who maintains, that he imitates Moses in describing the creation; but without any of the sublimity of the inspired writer.

Orpheus,  
Homer, So-  
lon and o-  
thers, bor-  
rowed from  
Hebrews.

We cannot entertain a doubt, that the Greeks were indebted to Hebrews, for certain opinions interspersed in their writings. Orpheus affirms God to be invisible, and known only to one person, a Chaldean, supposed to be Abraham; and entertains ideas of the Deity, that could hardly have been original. "Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool," is a remarkable passage; and so is that of "measuring the sea in the hollow of his hand." Orpheus expresses these ideas though in different words: God sits in heaven on a golden seat, and the earth is under his feet, and he reaches his right hand to the remotest extremities of the ocean (*h*). Such was the paraphrase of Or-

(*e*) xi. 22.  
Cap. xxvi.  
tionc.

(*f*) Marcilius Ficinus de Relig. Christiana,

(*g*) Joh. Philop. Lib. I. de Mundi Crea-

(*h*) Præp. Evang. Lib. XIII. Cap. vii.

pheus on the words of Scripture, and might have borrowed these words from those Egyptians, who were in Thrace in the army of Shishak (i). Homer's (k) description of the gardens of Alcinous, was probably taken from the paradise of Moses; and the Ate of this poet (l) cast down from heaven by Jove, marks the fall of Lucifer mentioned by Isaiah (m). The fable of Prometheus, who made a man of clay, and animated him with celestial fire, was evidently founded on the Mosaic account of the creation of man (n). The equal distribution of lands in Lacedemon, and the prohibition to alienate them, or marry out of their own family, were Mosaic institutions, borrowed by Lycurgus from Cretans and Egyptians, who were ultimately indebted for information to the Hebrews (o). Both Moses and Solon forbid killing a robber in the day; and if a girl's parents died, Solon obliged her nearest relations to marry her according to the law of Moses, which required persons to marry in their own tribe (p). Hebrews administered bitter waters in the tabernacle and temple, to wives who were suspected of infidelity to their husbands: in consequence of which ceremony, the woman and her gallant, if guilty of adultery,

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(i) Winder, Vol. II. Chap. vii. Sect. 7.  
Lib. XVII. (l) Iliad xix. 126.  
(n) Aug. Steuchus, Lib. IX. Cap. iv.  
Rep. Laced. Lib. III. Tab. iii. Inst. 3.  
de Ver. Relig. Christ. Lib. II. Cap. i. Sect 12.

(k) Odyss.  
(m) Chap. xiv.  
(o) Craige de  
(p) Grotius

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swelled, languished, rotted and expired (q). Heathens imitated this custom, and administered waters and an oath to persons suspected of crimes, and imagined the waters tasted sweet if they swore with truth; if falsely, the whole body was supposed to break out into blisters and imposthumes (r). Saxons and other Heathens tried persons suspected of guilt, by different sorts of ordeal, and expected that God would work a miracle to acquit the innocent and punish the guilty, as was usual among the Hebrews. Hence it is evident, that Pagans have stolen from the Jews or their writings, certain tenets; nor can we entertain a doubt, but they blended these tenets with their own inventions, in order to conceal the theft. Plato admits, that the Greeks improved what they received from Eastern nations; that is, altered and embellished them so, that scarce a similitude could be found between them and the originals.

Greeks indebted to them by the testimony of the learned.

That the Greeks were indebted to the Hebrews for information, either immediately, or by their intercourse with the Egyptians, will not admit of a doubt, when we shall have examined the opinions of the learned on this subject. Pythagoras, Solon, Plato and other sages, visited nations celebrated for wisdom, where they might have got acquainted with Jews, and the opinions of that people. Josephus (s) maintains, that Greeks were

(q) Numb. v. 22.  
Lib. I.

(r) Selden de jure nat. & gentium,  
(s) Contra Ap. Lib. I. Sect. 22.

indebted for information to the Jews; and Her-  
mippus assures us, that Pythagoras transfused some  
of the Jewish laws into his philosophy: Aristobu-  
lus, an Egyptian Jew, affirms, that this philoso-  
pher adopted many Hebrew precepts, and that  
Plato was acquainted with their laws and institu-  
tions (t). Numenius, a Pythagorean, accuses  
Plato of having stolen from the books of Moses,  
all that he said piously of God and the creation;  
and Porphyry asserts, that the Chaldeans and Jews  
possessed true wisdom and piety (u). Marcilius  
Ficinus (w) affirms, that one of Plato's disciples  
admired the theology of the Syrians or Jews, who  
were known by some under the appellation of Sy-  
rians. Justin Martyr and Eusebius, quote an an-  
cient oracle which proves, that the true knowledge  
of God was peculiar to Jews and Chaldeans;

*Soli Chaldæi Sapientiam Sortiti sunt et Hebræi  
Pure colentes Deum, regem per se genitum (x).*

Plato introduces Solon just returned from Egypt  
telling Critias, that he heard an Egyptian priest say,  
O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children,  
your doctrines are quite modern, and have no mark  
of antiquity (y). Which of the poets or Sophists,  
says Tertullian (z), that has not drawn from the

(t) Selden de jure nat. & gentium juxta disciplinam Hebræ-  
orum, Lib. I. Cap. ii. (u) Ibid. (w) De Relig.  
Christ. Cap. xxvi. (x) Brucker de Phil. Indorum, Lib. II.  
Cap. ii. Sect. 3. (y) Justin Martyr Cohort. ad Græcos,  
Cap. xii. (z) Apolog. Cap. xlvii.

**SECT.** <sup>II.</sup> prophets? Hence the philosophers have quenched their thirst: ambitious only of excelling in eloquence, and displaying their subtlety, they altered the opinions which they received, and blended them with their own inventions, so as to render it difficult to discover the truth. From the authority of these ancient writers, we may reasonably conclude, that Pagans introduced into their theology some doctrines of Hebrews: and we find this conclusion maintained by Grotius (*a*) and Selden (*b*), two as learned authors as ever wrote in any age or nation. These men, though not ecclesiastics, have adopted the sentiments of the ancients on this subject, and supported their opinions, by the same arguments and authorities which I have produced. The former of these writers (*c*) asserts, that the Greeks were indebted to the Hebrews, even for their alphabet, and to the laws of Moses for the most ancient laws of Athens, from which the laws of the twelve tables were afterwards taken. The affinity of the sounds of the Hebrew and Greek letters, proves that one was taken from the other; nor can it be doubted, that the Greeks borrowed from the Hebrews, and not the Hebrews from the Greeks. The Greek letters were but marks, while the Hebrew characters were significant, and the name of every letter

(*a*) De Veritate Religionis Christianæ.  
nat. & gentium.  
Cap. xv.

(*b*) De jure  
(*c*) De Verit. Relig. Christ. Lib. I.

denotes the figure, which that letter represents, S E C T.  
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 according to the language of hieroglyphics. Beth signifies an house, as that letter resembles it; the gimel or gamel signifies a camel, as the figure of that letter represents its neck; the daletth signifies a door and is like one; vau signifies and represents a pillar; the zain denotes a sabre, and has the figure of it; sen signifies teeth, and has the figure of a trident (*d*).

Greek philosophers and poets derived their the-  
 ology from Hebrews, Egyptians, and others: Cle-  
 mens Alexandrinus affirms, that Pythagoras bor-  
 rowed the doctrines of transmigration and the  
 soul's immortality from Egyptians; that Plato was  
 indebted to him for this latter doctrine, and that  
 the Greeks received instruction from the Brack-  
 mans or Gymnosophists. Steuchus is of opinion  
 that the Egyptians borrowed their theology from  
 the Hebrews, and that the Greeks received theirs  
 from Orpheus, who learned from Egyptians the  
 doctrines of that people. The following confi-  
 derations evince, that the most ancient philoso-  
 phers were more indebted for refined ideas of God  
 and religion to tradition or revelation, than to  
 the deductions of reason. Trismegistus and Or-  
 pheus, according to the theology of Moses, de-  
 clared that all things were created, except God,  
 who is without beginning or end (*e*). The latter

Ancient  
 philosophers  
 borrowed  
 their theo-  
 logy.

(*d*) Jewish Lett. Part I. Sect. 2.  
 Cap. xii. xiii.

(*e*) Steuchus, Lib. III.

**S E C T.** of these maintained, that all things were originally  
**II.** produced by Jupiter, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end ; from whom all things derive their origin ; he is the primitive father, and immortal virgin, the life, the cause, and the energy of all things ; there is but one only power, one only God, and one sole universal king (*f*). Pythagoras, who borrowed from Orpheus and Archytas, was of opinion, that mankind were created by God, made wiser than all animals, and lords of the creation, according to the Mosaic account (*g*). Pythagoras believed God to be invisible, intelligent, the universal spirit, that pervades all things, sees all things ; the sole principle, the light of heaven, the author of all virtues, the reason, the life and the motion of all beings ; according to this philosopher, there is but one God, who enlightens every thing, animates every thing, and by whom all things were brought from non-existence into being (*h*). Empedocles the disciple of Pythagoras, and interpreter of Orpheus, makes unity the creator of Gods, and maintains, that unity created those things which Moses affirms to have been created by God. Thales, the Milesian, held God to be the most ancient of beings ; the author of the universe ; the mind which brought the chaos from confusion into order, with-

(*f*) Ramsay's *Phil. Principles of Religion*, Vol. II. *Introd.*

(*g*) Steuchus, *Lib. IX. Cap. ii.*

(*h*) Ramsay, *ibid.*

out beginning or end ; and that night existed before day ; an idea possibly suggested by the history of Moses (i). Timeus Locrensis affirms, that God created the world out of unformed matter ; that before the creation, there were no years, days or changes of seasons ; and that after that event, the human body was formed and animated, according to the Mosaic account (k). Augustine Steuchus assures us, that Plato transfused into his writings the opinions of Pythagoras, Timeus, Empedocles and Trismegistus ; and we find that he entertained, with some slight variations, the ideas of his predecessors (l). Plato calls God the architect of the world, who reduced the chaos from confusion into order ; the father of the universe ; the God over all ; the sovereign mind, which orders all things, and penetrates all things, single and self-originated ; the maker of heaven and earth, and Gods, and the same in the intellectual world, that the sun is in the visible ; one king, one cause, and one providence (m). Such were the ideas entertained of God by the most ancient philosophers ; but these sublime ideas, being blended with others which were false or unworthy ; we may reasonably conclude, that they were not investigated by reason, but were stolen by the Greek philosophers, from those who preceded them.

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(i) Ramsay, *ibid.*

(k) Steuchus, *Lib. V. Cap. iv.*

(l) *Ibid.*

(m) Ramsay, *ibid.*

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 Greek philosophers, will be surprised, that they should borrow knowledge from the Hebrews, without acknowledging the debt; since they pilfered from each other, and disguised what they stole, in order to conceal their plagiarism. Clemens Alexandrinus has exposed the thefts of Greek poets, philosophers, historians and orators; some of which were not ashamed to transcribe entire volumes from other mens works, and publish them as their own: and even to dress up in fables the miracles related in the Old Testament; of which Clemens (n) furnishes many instances. Eusebius has proved the dishonesty, ambition, and plagiarism of Pagan authors, who repeatedly accuse each other of pilfering and theft. Porphyry relates a controversy between Caustrius and Maximus, about the merits of Ephorus and Theopompus. Caustrius maintains, that Ephorus wrote nothing of his own, but stole entirely from Damascus, Calisthenes and Anaximenes; while Apollonius replied, that Theopompus stole a particular oration, word for word, from Isocrates, and even ascribed the actions of one man to another, who never performed them. Nicagoras, quoted by Eusebius, assures us, that Theopompus borrowed a great deal from Xenophon, and altered it for the worse, to conceal his theft. Aristophanes, the Grammarian, compiled six books of the thefts of

Greek philosophers  
were plagiarists.

(n) Stromatum,

Menander, and Cecilius convicts him of stealing S E C T.  
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an entire fable, and transcribing it into his work. Hellanicus borrowed from Herodotus and Damascus; Herodotus derived great part of his second book from Heccateus the Milesian; and Isocrates and Demosthenes transcribed, almost word for word, particular parts of the works of Iseus. Antimachus borrowed from Homer, and Plato from Protagoras, what he writes against those who maintained there is but one (*o*) being; and Brucker (*p*) affirms, that Aristotle founded a sect on the philosophy of Plato, stole from the ancients, and studied brevity and obscurity, to conceal his theft. Since then the Greeks were such noted plagiaries at home, where they were liable to detection; it might naturally be expected, that such of them as travelled, would more freely indulge their itch for literary theft, where they stole from a people, not equally known to Pagan nations. Plato, though guilty of this crime, candidly acknowledged, that he learned his most valuable dogmas in Egypt, and that a philosopher might be assisted on every side (*q*).

If we examine the theology of philosophers, we shall find it blended with opinions that are false, unworthy of God, and quite inconsistent with those which have already been recited. Py- Their absurdities prove that they borrowed their theology.

(*o*) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. X. Cap. i.  
Secta Ionia, Cap. i. Sect. 4.  
Lib. I. Sect. 6.

(*p*) De  
(*q*) Clem. Alex. Strom.

thagoras,

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thagoras, founder of the Italian sect, thought the harmony of numbers was the principle of all things; Thales the Milesian, founder of the Ionic, maintained that water was the principle, and that all things when dissolved reverted to it again. The following were disciples and successors of these two philosophers, in their respective schools, namely, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Hippasus, Archelaus, Democritus, Epicurus, Empedocles and others; each of which held opinions repugnant to reason, and somewhat different from the rest. Anaximander maintained, that all things were generated from infinity, and terminated in it; Anaximenes derived the origin of all things from air, Heraclitus and Hippasus from fire; Archelaus believed, that air was infinite, and that density and rarity were principles of all things. Democritus and Epicurus affirmed, atoms to be principles; and Empedocles held the four elements, fire, water, air and earth, together with friendship and discord, to be principles of all things (r). Plato and Aristotle differed in some respects from their predecessors, and from each other in their theology and philosophy: the latter pretends, that the Supreme Being exists in some ethereal body; while the former affirms, that he exists in a fiery substance; an idea perhaps borrowed from the appearance of God to Moses, in a flame of fire in a bush. The former held matter and idea to be

(r) Justin. Martyr Cohort. ad Græcos, Cap. iii. iv.

principles of all things; while the latter denies SECT. II. ideas to be principles at all: the former thinks the soul immoveable and immortal; the latter both moveable and mortal. Some held it to be in us, others about us; some assert it to be fire, some water, others motion, others exhalation, others an influence from the stars (s). Plato, who entertained sublime ideas of God, blends them with fallhood and human inventions; applauds Socrates for paying his vows to Pallas, and sacrificing a cock to Esculapius; and heaps divine praises on the Demon of Delphi. He has adopted the absurd opinion of the Egyptians, that the souls of men enter into the bodies of different animals, according as they resemble them in their appetites and passions. This philosopher asserts, in one part of his work, that God created the heavens; and in another, that divine honours were to be paid to them: in his Book of Laws, he condemns the fables of poets, and yet falls himself into popular superstitions (t). Had his sentiments been original, he could not have contradicted himself in so palpable a manner; the wisdom of philosophers, being blended with vulgar errors, could not be the result of rational disquisition; as men capable of investigating by reason the attributes of God, could not be so inconsistent, nor so frequently degenerate into absurdity and error.

(s) Justin Martyr Cohort. ad Græcos, Cap. v. vi. vii.

(t) Præp. Evang. Lib. XIII. Cap. vii. and x.

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Plato founded the Academic sect, few of his successors sincerely embraced his philosophy, but altered it for the worse. Some of them maintained, that the senses were fallacious; while Sceptics maintained, that nothing was to be comprehended by sense and reason. The Platonics, Epicureans and Stoics, were continually engaged in controversy; while there is a wonderful harmony between Moses and the prophets on theological subjects. The Platonic philosophers considered God as superintending human affairs; the Epicureans believed him regardless about them: the Stoics placed him without the world, and represented him as a potter, governing the universe; while the Platonics placed him within it, like a pilot, steering and directing the whole. Even the citizen of Geneva (*u*) condemns the opinions of philosophers as "vain, dictatorial, and dogmatical even in their pretended scepticism; ignorant of nothing, and yet proving nothing; ridiculing each other, and in this last particular, wherein they were agreed, they seemed to be in the right: affecting to triumph, when they attacked their opponents; they wanted every thing to make them capable of a vigorous defence. If you examine their reasons, you will find them fit only to be refuted; if you number voices, every man is reduced to his own suffrage; they agree in nothing but disputing." Cicero's books, on the Nature of the

(*u*) System of Education, Book IV.

Gods,

Gods, are a melancholy proof of the insufficiency S E C T. II.  
of reason to discover the nature and attributes  
of the Deity. This philosopher was learned in  
all the wisdom of Greeks and Romans, and saw  
thoroughly the absurdities of others; and yet,  
with every advantage of genius and erudition, he  
was a Sceptic in religion; and his insufficiency to  
devise a pure system of theism, proves the ne-  
cessity of supernatural assistance. From the mix-  
ture of truth and falsehood in the opinions of phi-  
losophers, it is probable that they were indebted  
to their own weak reason for those dogmas which  
were absurd, puerile and contradictory;—and to  
revelation for rational ideas relative to God. If  
they had deduced theological knowledge from  
their own researches, they would probably have  
improved in theology, as in arts and sciences;  
and men who lived several centuries after Pytha-  
goras, would have been better instructed in sacred  
knowledge than that philosopher. But history  
evinces, that ancient philosophers have entertain-  
ed the most sublime ideas of God, and that, as  
mankind advanced to maturity, absurd ones were  
the fruits of philosophical investigations.

When the advocate of natural religion considers, Divine at-  
tributes not  
investigated  
by reason.  
how much philosophers have been indebted to re-  
velation for theological information, he will have  
little reason to boast of the powers of unassisted  
reason, and of the researches of Plato and other  
sages of antiquity. The gainfayer will perhaps  
M 2 find,

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find, that philosophers received pious and moral dogmas from those who learned them from the scriptures, or from those who had an intercourse with that people: that these men were indebted, for almost every sublime idea of God, to Moses, the prophets, and the writings of Solomon; and for their errors and absurdities, to the weakness and insufficiency of unassisted reason. Hence he will perceive the difficulty of proving, that a sense of the being and attributes of God was investigated by reason, independent of revelation. So consonant to reason are the divine attributes, that it would be absurd to deny, that they are capable of such an investigation; but it is impossible to prove, that philosophers actually investigated them, unassisted by revelation. In proving this proposition, the advocate of natural religion should acquaint men, why the modern Chinese, who are a sagacious and learned people, are so ignorant of it; and why, in ancient times, celebrated orators and poets; the subtle inventors of logic and other arts; profound astronomers and investigators of mathematical truths, have been greater strangers to a rational worship, than Jews and Christians, however dull and incapable of invention. To prove that philosophers investigated the attributes of God, unassisted by revelation, the freethinker should point out the time in which an universal and total ignorance prevailed, with respect to these attributes; the periods in which,

which, and the persons by whom they were in-<sup>SECT.</sup>  
 vestigated; and above all, that these persons had <sup>II.</sup>  
 no opportunities of borrowing them from the  
 scriptures, either directly or indirectly. On the  
 contrary, it is undeniable, that a knowledge of  
 the divine attributes, and of moral duties, pre-  
 vailed in the world long before the art of logic,  
 and before sophisters argued on these subjects, *a*  
*priori* and *a posteriori*. In the books of Moses,  
 the attributes of God are declared and established  
 by miracles, without a single attempt to deduce  
 them from causes and effects: this is the work of  
 ancient and modern philosophers who stole from  
 the scriptures, and wished to conceal the theft by  
 abstract reasonings, which, in some instances,  
 have been false and inconclusive. These men  
 reason, perhaps, acutely, and their subtlety in  
 arguing on these subjects, has prompted them to  
 arrogate to themselves the whole credit of disco-  
 veries made long before. Kepler (*w*) discovered  
 by calculation, that the periodical times of planets  
 round the same centre are in a sesquiplicate ratio  
 of the distances; Newton (*x*) afterwards demonstrated  
 the physical necessity of this great law: and we  
 might as reasonably ascribe to this philosopher the  
 honour of Kepler's discovery, as attribute to phi-  
 losophers the discovery of moral or religious  
 knowledge; because they reasoned on these sub-

(*w*) Keil's Astronomy, Lect. 4.  
 Lib. I. Prop. 15.

(*x*) Princ. Math.

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jects from causes or effects: nay more so, since the arguments of the latter have been generally weak, while the reasonings of Newton are solid and incontrovertible. "If," says Hume (y), "the arguments for the existence of one God were clear, then polytheism could not have generally prevailed; if abstruse, the knowledge of it must have been confined to few; and therefore polytheism must have been the primary religion of mankind." But does not history acquaint us, that the most ancient nations were not polytheists, but worshippers of the true God? and does not the gainfayer's argument, if valid, prove the divine original of the Mosaic writings? for if the unity of God was discovered by reason, the knowledge of it must have been confined to few, and could not have universally prevailed among the Jews; while Pagan philosophers were grossly ignorant, and Heathen nations were sunk in ignorance and polytheism.

Brueker  
errs in de-  
nying that  
Heathens  
borrowed  
from He-  
brews.

Learned authors have denied, that philosophers borrowed any thing from the writings of the Hebrews, or their intercourses with that people; and seem to have been influenced by a spirit of opposition, to combat the opinion which I have endeavoured to establish. The Greeks having traduced both Jews and Christians as ignorant barbarians, destitute of arts and elegance; primitive

(y) Essay Nat. Hist. of Religion, Sect. 1.

Christians

Christians retorted on the Greeks, with learning <sup>SECT.</sup>  
and zeal; and maintained, that they borrowed <sup>II</sup>  
every thing valuable in their works, from those  
whom they branded with such opprobrious epi-  
thets. Not content with ascribing the best theo-  
logical tenets of Heathens to Jews, they made  
them parents of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy,  
architecture, music, chymistry, and of every art,  
science and endowment, except eloquence, in  
which they readily allowed the Greeks to be supe-  
rior. Other writers, having maintained with equal  
zeal, that Greeks were not indebted to revelation  
for any of their dogmas; I have endeavoured to  
avoid each extreme, by selecting ideas which seem  
to have been derived by Heathens from Hebrews,  
and by passing over others not drawn from that  
source. The learned Brucker having denied that  
Heathens were indebted to Hebrews for theolo-  
gical knowledge, I cannot pass over unnoticed the  
opinions of this respectable writer, this critic of  
philosophers, without attempting to refute them.  
This author assures us, that Barbarians owed their  
knowledge more to tradition than investigation;  
being strangers to the deduction of effects from  
causes, and to logical subtleties which puzzle and  
perplex. There were no philosophers among the  
Hebrews; they did not argue, but assert; their  
wisdom was not speculative, but political, moral  
and religious; nor were Moses and the prophets  
indebted for their laws and precepts to the deduc-

SECT. tions of reason, but to tradition and revelation (2).

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So far I concur with this celebrated author, and even admit the absurdity of supposing the Hebrews furnished with any knowledge except religious in a supernatural way; but I cannot agree with him, that the Greeks received no religious knowledge from the books of the Jews, or from that people, for the reasons produced in a preceding part of this section. Even Brucker deduces the origin of almost all discipline and philosophy, from Barbarians; whilst he maintains, that we are indebted to none but Greeks for logic and the art of philosophising. This writer does not sufficiently distinguish between philosophy and religion: the Greeks, it is admitted, owed but little of the rudiments of philosophy to the Hebrews, though indebted to that people for just ideas of God and religion: and I challenge gainsayers to point out any thing moral or pious in the works of philosophers, which might not be transcribed from the lives of patriarchs, or found in the writings of Moses and the prophets wrote long before. We are not to suppose these men inspired with a knowledge of arts and sciences; the Hebrews were not chosen as repositories of such things; and it would be absurd to imagine them enlightened in a supernatural way with a knowledge of things unnecessary for mens happiness in this world or the next. This author

(2) Bruckeri Hist. Crit. de Philosophia Barbarica, Lib. I. Cap. i. Sect. 3.

affirms,

affirms, that as Moses was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, Mercury Trismegistus, who was S E C T.  
II. founder of Egyptian wisdom, must have been prior to Moses. But the fallacy of Brucker's argument consists, in supposing Egyptian wisdom to have originated from an individual, and that Hermes was that individual: the gradual progress of knowledge, in every country, proves the former of these suppositions to be false; and even Brucker admits the impossibility of proving the latter; as we may consistently with his opinions form several hypotheses concerning Mercury Trismegistus: some maintained that he was some patriarch; others have doubted or denied his existence; some asserted that he flourished before, and others that he lived after the Hebrew lawgiver. However, none of these accounts can be safely relied on, since, according to this learned writer, the most ancient monuments of Egypt are filled with fables and uncertain traditions; and that country has undergone several changes from inundations, earthquakes and invasions, which dispersed and destroyed the ancient inhabitants, and introduced foreigners with strange customs in their room (a). How then can Brucker pretend to say, with any degree of certainty, or even probability, that Mercury was founder of Egyptian wisdom and prior to Moses? How can we, according to

(a) De Phil. Ægyptiorum, Lib. II. Cap. vii. Sect. 3 and 4.

**SECT. II.** his own account, depend upon any thing which has been related of the wisdom or inhabitants of ancient Egypt? His argument tends to prove, that we know nothing of Hermes, and not that he was senior to Moses: in this case, where we recur to authorities, we must conclude, that the Hebrew lawgiver was prior to Mercury, as the weight of testimonies appears on that side of the question.

The same  
subject con-  
tinued.

Brucker doubts, whether Pythagoras ever travelled to the East, though he affirms that he learned in Egypt his aversion to beans, and the doctrine of transmigration (*b*): he intimates, that philosophers who differed from each other, did not draw from the Egyptians; though by his own account, it was possible for them to have derived knowledge from that people, and yet differ among themselves: since different provinces differed from each other in their rites and explanations of hieroglyphics; and to this difference he himself ascribes the contradictory relations of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch (*c*). Brucker denies, that Socrates was indebted to the Hebrews for knowledge, and ascribes his superiority over all others to the strength of his reason; but assigns no cause for his opinion, except that the Jews were not known to him, as he had never travelled (*d*). Socrates was undoubtedly the first of

(*b*) De Phil. Ægyp. Lib. II. Cap. vii. Sect. 7.

(*c*) Ibid. Cap. vii. Sect. 2.

(*d*) De Schola Socratica, Sect. 7.

the Greek philosophers who reasoned on the virtues and vices of men; and the first who brought philosophy down from heaven, and called off his disciples, from mathematics and physics, to the study of ethics. But no person will affirm, that he was the first who reasoned on the being and attributes of God, or deny, that he might have received theological knowledge from the successors of Thales and Pythagoras, who were parents of Greek philosophy. The former, who founded the Ionic school, was succeeded in it by Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, and Archelaus the teacher of Socrates (*e*). Socrates believed in intermediate spirits, the ministers of God, and directors of human affairs; which opinion was maintained in Greece by Thales and his successors (*f*); and in Italy in the schools of Pythagoras and Empedocles. Since then Socrates was indebted for knowledge to the Ionian and Italian schools, though he had never been in them, why might he not have received information from the Hebrews by tradition, though he had never been in Palestine? especially as a pupil of Archelaus, the lineal successor of Thales, he might have learned from the Egyptians the tenets of the Jews. Brucker affirms, that strangers brought with them into Greece religious and poli-

(*e*) De Schola Socratica, Sect. 7.

(*f*) De Philos. Græcorum Fabulari, Part II. Lib. I. Cap. i. Sect. 7.

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tical knowledge; Danaus and Cecrops from Egypt, Cadmus from Phenicia, and Orpheus from Thrace. Cecrops was the first who philosophised about the Great Jove; Orpheus, after Prometheus and Linus, is considered as parent of Greek theology; and to the Egyptians, the Greeks were indebted for their theogonies, or fabular philosophy (*g*). Here we have discovered another source from whence Socrates, Plato, and others, might have derived knowledge, which encreases the difficulty of proving, that they were indebted to reason for theological information. Brucker maintains, that an handful of Jews, who went to Egypt after the destruction of Jerulålem, were too insignificant to attract the attention of all Egypt to know their dogmas, and not so famed for learning, as to invite inquisitive Greeks to desire an intercourse with them (*h*). I do not affirm, that the Hebrews were famous for learning or sophistry; but contend, that curious Greeks who visited Egypt for information, might have learned religious, moral, and political wisdom from the laws of Moses, the proverbs of Solomon, and the exhortations of the prophets. Clemens Alexandrinus assures us, that the philosophy of the ancients was delivered in short and strong sentences, like these proverbs; and Plato asserts, that Cretans and Lacedemonians

(*g*) De Philos. Græcorum Fabulari, Part II. Lib. I. Cap. i. Sect. 7.

(*h*) De Platone ejusq. Philosophia, Sect. 6.

adopted this stile in their laws and writings. The SECT. II. Egyptians could not be strangers to, or indifferent about the singular opinions of men who were considered as favourites of heaven; and might have gratified their curiosity from Jeremiah, Baruch, and other Jews, who resided in Egypt; who, though few in number, might as effectually have instructed the inquisitive, in the dogmas of their religion, as the whole Jewish nation. It will readily be admitted, that the bulk of a nation trouble themselves but little, about any religion except their own; but the curious and learned are never satisfied with such knowledge, and desire to be acquainted with the religious tenets entertained by others. Brucker (*i*) thinks it probable, that Zoroaster did not borrow his doctrines from the Hebrews; since by the diversity of their laws and rites, they admitted none, except proselytes, to a participation of their religion. But surely these proselytes were likely to propagate the Jewish tenets to their Pagan neighbours: and even this writer assures us, that different persons considered Zoroaster as instructed by Jeremiah or Daniel, during the Babylonish captivity, from his extraordinary knowledge of the Old Testament and Psalms (*k*).

Brucker rejects the authority of Jewish and Christian doctors, who ascribed the wisdom of He errs in denying that Plato borrowed from them.

(i) De Phil. veterum Arabum, Lib. II. Cap. v.

(k) De Phil. Persarum, Lib. II. Cap. v.

SECT. II. Plato to his journey into Egypt ; and thinks they

were interested in deducing from Judaism the dogmas of this philosopher (1). But besides the doctors who defended this opinion in the early ages of Christianity, on the authority of Pagans ; we find it adopted by two modern laymen, as learned and judicious as the objector, and uninterested in supporting the dignity of Jewish institutions against the wisdom of philosophers. Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius assure us, on the authority of Aristobulus, that there was in Egypt a Greek version of the Mosaic law which Plato might have read. Brucker objects to his authority, as he does not mention the name, nor occasion of this version ; and as it was unknown to all persons who had opportunities of seeing it. But does it follow that this version never was made, because travellers do not mention it ? Is their silence sufficient to overthrow the arguments and authorities, which have already been produced ? Is it probable that notorious plagiarists, who travelled for information, would, even if they had consulted this translation, published the source from which they derived knowledge, or own themselves indebted for it, to a people whom they hated ? He says, that the Jewish nation lived in obscurity, and had no intercourse with foreigners, before the time of Alexander the Great ; by this prince the Greek language was introduced into Egypt, and the Jews conceal-

(1) De Platone ejusq. Philosophia, Sect. 6.

ed their sacred books from the Gentiles, so that he SECT.  
II. cannot comprehend how such a version could be made. And yet, this author (*m*) admits that Jews had intercourse with Egyptians in war and traffic, while they hated each other in matters of religion. If he would infer from the introduction of Greek by Alexander, that a version could not have been made before his time, he argues falsely; since in a learned country like Egypt, the Greek tongue must have been understood by many men before Alexander established it, and the Mosaic law might have been translated for the use of such men. Brucker (*n*) cannot conceive how such a version could have been made, as the Jews concealed their sacred books from the view of the Gentiles. But let me ask, for what purpose they would hide from Heathens those religious tenets, which they so freely communicated to proselytes? Were they ashamed to publish to the world the natural and moral attributes of God, which were so consonant to reason, and so fully established by the miracles of their lawgiver? Surely they were not. The Hebrews shunned intercourses with foreigners, not from a dread of revealing their knowledge, but lest their people should be seduced to superstition from the worship of the true God.

This author admits, in some cases, a similarity between Platonic and Jewish dogmas, but ascribes

He errs with respect to the similitude of Jewish and Pagan dogmas.

(*m*) De Platone ejusq. Philosophia, Sect. 6.

(*n*) Ibid.

**SECT.** it to reason and to a law more ancient than the  
 II. Mosaic, disseminated by tradition, and corrupted in the propagation. He maintains, that a false similarity is often struck out, by men not intimately acquainted with the tenets of Plato; which, if considered as Mosaic, differ essentially from the entire system of this philosopher. I readily agree with this learned writer, that ingenious men often strike out resemblances where perhaps there is none; and partly admit, that where there is a real similarity, it may in some respects be ascribed to reason, and to the Noachian law propagated by tradition to all mankind. But I cannot accede to the opinion, that Plato did not borrow from the Hebrews, nor to the reason on which he founds that opinion, namely, that the Mosaic dogmas differ widely from the entire system of this philosopher. Even Brucker (o) allows, that Plato was a plagiarist and borrowed his fine feathers from Aristippus, Antisthenes, Epicharmus and Socrates, and adulterated and changed the discipline of Pythagoras. He assures us, that Plato borrowed a great deal of Pythagoras's theology, and attributed it to Socrates (p); that he was instructed in the doctrines of Heraclitus and Parmenides, and confounded the systems of different countries and men (q). Why then should it be matter of sur-

(o) De Platone ejusq. Philosophia, Sect. 6.

(p) De Schola Socratica, Sect. 14.

(q) De Schola Cyrenaica aliisq. Sect. 1.

prise, that particular dogmas of Moses should differ from the entire system of Plato? May we not as reasonably deny that he was indebted to philosophers, because he differs from each, and all of them in some material respect? This author thinks it improbable that Plato, who travelled in the disguise of a foreign merchant, should receive information in Egypt from cunning priests, who were hardly prevailed on, by king Amasis, to initiate Pythagoras, though he submitted to be circumcised (r). I readily admit, that juggling priests might be unwilling to disclose to strangers a knowledge of their own mysteries; but desire to know, from what motive they would conceal the religious tenets of the Hebrews, to which curious priests could not be strangers, and which the Jews themselves never concealed, but rather boasted of to others?

It has been objected to the mild government of the Jews, and to the wisdom of their policy, that their lawgiver tolerated and even commanded human sacrifices. It cannot be denied, that some offered human sacrifices to the gods of the Canaanites; but it is equally undeniable that the Canaanites were cut off for this detestable practice; and that Moses expressly forbade this worship to his people (s). It may as reasonably be objected to the gospel, that it tolerates fornication

Whether  
the law allowed of  
human sacrifices.

(r) De Platone ejusq. Philosophia, Sect. 5.

(s) Lev. xx. 2. xxviii. 21.

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and adultery, because these crimes are committed in Christian countries, as object to Judaism, because some of its professors have been guilty of human sacrifices contrary to its spirit. If God had approved of them, he would not have prevented Abraham from offering his son; if Moses had commanded them, he would have determined the persons to be offered, and on what occasions they were to be sacrificed; then pious kings would have offered human victims, and this ceremony would not have been so reprobated by David (*t*) and Jeremiah (*u*). The Jewish lawgiver even prohibited his people to imitate the manner in which the Canaanites served their gods; “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination unto the Lord have they done unto their gods; even their sons and their daughters have they burned in the fire to their gods (*w*).” To prove that human sacrifices have been commanded, some have urged the sacrifice of Jephtha’s daughter, and a passage of Leviticus, which is little to the purpose. As to the former, it is doubtful, whether she was sacrificed; and if she was, I desire to know whether Jephtha’s conduct has been applauded by good men and observers of the law (*x*). The mis-translation of the following passage of Leviticus, has occasioned a mistake with respect to sacrifices:—“None devoted, which shall

(*t*) Pf. cvi. 37.(*u*) xix. 2.(*w*) Deut. xlii. 29.(*x*) Jewish Lett. Part III. Lett. VI.

be devoted of men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death ;” or shall surely die, as the latter part of the verse is more properly translated : then the evident import of the passage is this, No person devoted to the service of God in the tabernacle or temple, as Samuel was, shall be redeemed, but die in that devoted state (y). To prove that human sacrifices were tolerated, it is urged that Samuel cut Agag in pieces ; it is true he put him to death, but no more sacrificed him, than a man who is slain for rebellion against his sovereign, can be said to be sacrificed unto God (z).

Some have judged it inconsistent with the goodness and justice of God, to command the Israelites to extirpate the Canaanites, and seize on lands to which they had no right : such a precedent has been considered dangerous ; since it may encourage enthusiasts and impostors, to pretend a commission from heaven, when they wish to possess the estates of their neighbours. But, had not the Governor of the World a right to transfer property, and the Giver of Life to deprive men of it ; and to employ the Israelites in punishing those who had forfeited both, by their vices and transgressions ? Surely there was no injustice in employing plague, famine, the sword, or fire from heaven, to destroy a wicked people guilty of beastiality, incest, and every impurity, for which So-

How far it  
was lawful  
to eject and  
destroy the  
Canaanites.

(y) Orr's Theory of Religion.

(z) Jewish Lett. Part III. Lett. VI.

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dom and Gomorrah were destroyed, and in using the Israelites as instruments for that purpose. The Hebrews were not put into possession of the land of Canaan, until its inhabitants had forfeited it for their wickedness, and been guilty of crimes punished by the wisest legislators, with forfeiture and death. Moses did not eject the Canaanites for idolatrous opinions, or errors of the understanding; but for detestable crimes restrained in every well-regulated community, as inconsistent with the welfare of individuals and societies: to allow such crimes would be impolitic; to call restraints on such enormities persecution, is foolish and absurd. The Israelites pretended no claim to those lands except the divine grant; and thought themselves settled in them by the same power which delivered them from Egyptian servitude. God is the disposer of all property, and daily transfers, or suffers it to be transferred from one man to another: if he gave it to the Israelites, they could not have held it by a better title; and had they acquired it by the sword, they had the same title, which other nations have, who are indebted to the sword for all their possessions. The Canaanites were not massacred, but extinguished as a nation; and might have remained in the land unmolested, as tributaries of the Israelites (*a*). The threat of punishing apostacy, and cutting off

(*a*) Lowman's Hebrew Government, and Orr's Theory of Religion.

the violators of ritual precepts, was denounced s e c t.  
II.  
 against his own people, and not against Heathens  
 and idolaters; Israelites or proselytes of the gate  
 were punished for idolatry, while strangers who  
 lived occasionally among them were not punished  
 for breaches of the Mosaic laws. Nor does the  
 precedent of destroying idolaters, and stripping  
 them of their possessions, expose society to the  
 smallest danger from enthusiasts and impostors:  
 since men who could not clearly prove themselves  
 divinely commissioned, like Moses, would never  
 pretend to a similar authority; as an attempt to  
 counterfeit miracles, would immediately detect  
 their designs, and impostures.

God is no respecter of persons, because under  
 the Jewish dispensation he chose the Israelites as  
 favourites; and under the Christian, withheld the  
 benefits of the gospel from a great part of man-  
 kind. So far were the Hebrews from having ex-  
 perience the divine partiality, that some have  
 wondered, that their God would suffer them to be  
 punished by frequent captivities: nor do objectors  
 consider, that God had higher objects than the  
 prosperity or adversity of the Israelites, who were  
 instruments in producing events of more universal  
 importance to mankind, than the happiness of that  
 people. If God had afforded different degrees of  
 knowledge to individuals and communities, and  
 rewarded them in the direct proportion of that

The elec-  
 tion of the  
 Hebrews no  
 argument  
 of divine  
 partiality.

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knowledge, then might he justly be charged with partiality to the Hebrews. But human happiness or misery does not depend on stores of knowledge; nor was it granted to that people, for their own emolument, but for the benefit of others. They were chosen for the purpose of preserving and propagating the knowledge of the true God, and not for their own advantage. On the contrary, the abuse of superior knowledge deprived them of the divine favour, and exposed them to calamities, which they might have escaped, had they not been possessed of superior endowments. Ignorant nations, as well as individuals, may stand as high in the sight of God as more refined ones, provided they act according to the small share of knowledge granted them by their Creator; since to whom much is given, of him shall much be required. It will appear in the next section, that the light of the gospel would be highly useful to many, from whom it is withheld; but God does not grant to all societies the same conveniences of trade and agriculture; the same temperature of climate and fertility of soil; nor confer on individuals the same strength of mind or body; nor has any person more reason to complain, that God has withheld from him the wisdom and talents bestowed on others, than to murmur at not being created with the capacity of an angel. Man is accountable only for the improvement or abuse of his faculties;

culties ; and the gospel teaches, that if we employ <sup>SECT.</sup>  
these properly, we shall have our reward in this <sup>II.</sup>  
world or the next ; that God deals equitably with  
every man ; so that “ as many as have sinned  
without law shall also perish without law ; and as  
many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by  
the law.”

## S E C T. III.

TENDENCY AND EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN  
RELIGION.

*Doctrines and motives of the gospel.*—Lord Kaim's idea of universal benevolence.—His opinion of the malignant affections.—Bolingbroke approves of the moral system of Christians.—Gospel motives to obedience preferable to any other.—The practices of barbarous states prove the expediency of the Christian system.—The gospel tends to abolish the evils of revenge among Barbarians.—Cruelty and murder among uncivilized states.—Excellence of the gospel proved from the bad effects of violating its precepts in Peru and other places.—Bad effects of violating it in the English colonies of the West and East Indies.—Effects of violating it in Denmark, Ireland, Poland and Russia.—Effects of modern Paganism prove the excellent tendency of the gospel.—The gospel tends to remove the bad effects of false ideas of futurity.—It tends to abolish austerities and other effects of superstition.—Effects of Paganism at Malabar, Narsinga, and other places.—Effects of Paganism in North and South America.—Some superstitions productive of gentleness among Indians and Peru-

*Peruvians.—Frauds in China, Arrakan, and other places.—Frauds in Peru, Congo, Loango, and other places.—Frauds in Whidah, Guinea, and other places.—Frauds in Japan and other places.—Frauds of priests marks of false religion.—Difficult to ascertain the actual effects of the gospel.—The gospel abolished divorce and polygamy.—It mitigated the rigours of servitude.—Its teachers preserved justice and checked warriors.—Gospel abolished barbarous practices.—It abolished the fights of gladiators.—It rendered Britons, Scots, Gauls and Irish less barbarous.—It checked cruelty in China and Japan.—It abolished human sacrifices and other cruelties in many places.—Also idolatry and cruelty in Germany, Paraguay, and Canary islands.—It diffused knowledge and abolished some bad effects of superstition.—Its teachers preserved learning.—The example of Christians taught Pagans kindness to the distressed.—Gospel rendered its first proselytes true and honest;—patient, constant and chaste.—Corrected pride and vanity.—Improved the old Roman laws.—Calumnies against Christians and the gospel serviceable to both.—Christians falsely accused of incest and devouring infants.—Of being atheists and authors of public calamities.—Of turbulence.—Of being poor and ignorant.—And useless members of society.—Tertullian and Justin Martyr prove mankind reformed by the gospel.—The same proved by other authors.—Julian and Pliny admit the vir-*

*tues of Christians.—An assertion of Mr. Gibbon examined.—Animadversions on Dr. Priestley's 56th lecture.*

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III.

Doctrines  
and motives  
of the gos-  
pel.

HAVING, in the preceding sections, pointed out the influence of natural, Pagan and Jewish religions; I proceed to examine the tendency of the doctrines and motives of the gospel, and their actual effects on individuals and communities. We may judge of its excellent tendency, by a recital of its doctrines, and by an history of the pernicious effects of violating its precepts in many nations of the earth. Such an history must tend to vindicate Christianity from the aspersions of weak or designing men, who have imputed to it the wicked acts of its professors; acts perpetrated in direct opposition to its letter and spirit, and which resulted from a want of religion, or from excesses or corruptions of it. A bare recital of the doctrines of Christianity will oblige us to acknowledge, that it has a tendency to promote the happiness of individuals and societies. Private felicity arises from the exercise of love and gratitude towards God, and resignation to his providence; from humanity, justice, and good-will towards man; and from a due government of our appetites and passions. Social happiness proceeds from a disinterested regard for the public welfare; from diligence in our calling; from a strict regard to truth, justice, and charity, in our intercourses

with

with men. The gospel every where enjoins these virtues, and prompts its professors to the exercise of humility, forbearance, self-denial, forgiveness, and beneficence: virtues which tend to moderate the passions, to banish cruelty, and to render men mild, peaceable, benevolent and courteous. Christianity enlarges the mind, inspires us with exalted ideas of the Deity and his attributes, and banishes every idea of him which is unworthy or erroneous. Its ritual observances are few in number, easy to perform, decent, expressive and edifying (a). It requires no duties but such as are essential; and prescribes accurate rules for the regulation of mens conduct. It instructs them in their duty, promises the assistance of God's spirit in the discharge of it, and exhibits a striking example of spotless purity, which we may safely imitate. The gospel teaches that worldly afflictions are equally incident to good and bad men; a doctrine highly conducive to the support of virtue. This tenet consoles us in distress, prevents despair, and encourages us to hold fast our integrity, however overwhelmed by trials and afflictions. Christianity represents all men as children of the same God and heirs of the same salvation, and levels all distinctions of rich and poor, as accidental, and insignificant in his sight, who rewards or punishes according to the merits or demerits of his creatures. This doctrine, so friendly to virtue, tends to humble the proud, to

S E C T.  
III.

(a) Blair's Sermons.

**S E C T.** add dignity to the lowly ; to render princes and  
**III.** inferior magistrates moderate and just, gentle and  
 condescending to their inferiors ; subjects resigned  
 and contented with their situation, cheerfully obe-  
 dient to the laws, and consequently quiet and  
 peaceable citizens. The Christian institution tends  
 to render judges just and impartial in their deci-  
 sions, and witnesses true and conscientious in their  
 testimonies, as I have already observed. It re-  
 quires husbands to be affectionate and indulgent to  
 their wives, wives to be faithful and respectful to  
 their husbands, and both to be true and constant  
 to each other. It enjoins masters to be kind and  
 gentle to servants, servants to be sincere and at-  
 tentive to their masters. If strongly impressed on  
 the minds of men, it must necessarily dispose them  
 to perform their respective duties, in every state  
 and condition, gently, justly, and conscientiously.  
 Were its precepts universally observed, we should  
 see discord banished from societies, individuals  
 would be simple in their manners, sober, industri-  
 ous and just in their lives ; and cheerful and re-  
 signed under all the dispensations of providence.  
 The design of the gospel was to teach men to  
 deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; to live soberly  
 and righteously in the present world ; to check the  
 influence of pride, vanity and self-love ; and to  
 induce them to do kind offices even for their ene-  
 mies. Such is the purity of the gospel, that it  
 forbids us to harbour impure thoughts, and even

to look at a woman to lust after her. It requires S E C T. III.  
us to abandon our vices, though as dear to us as a right eye or a right hand; and, though wise as serpents, to be harmless as doves. The Christian scheme tends to prevent a continuance of immorality, by offering pardon for the past, provided offenders return and be obedient for the future. The gospel assures the truly penitent, that their sins will be forgiven, and the gospel alone gives this assurance. Unassisted reason will never tell a man, that his sins will be forgiven, even on sincere repentance; we are bound to an uniform obedience through the whole course of our lives, and to be obedient for the future, though we had been innocent for the past; and therefore that uniform obedience, which was required even from those who had not transgressed, could never be supposed to atone for past offences (c). The gospel naturally tends to expand the heart and affections, and to inspire men with charity, universal benevolence, and love of their country. Its sanctions exalt the mind above the paltry pursuits of this world, and tend to render Christians incorruptible by wealth, honours or pleasures, those general temptations to venality and corruption. Minds impressed with the doctrines of the gospel would spurn at a bribe, and not hesitate to sacrifice every selfish consideration, to a regard for the public welfare. The sincere Christian discharges every

(c) Conybeare against Tindal.

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moral and social duty from a love and fear of God, without any regard to temporal interest or the penalties of the law. Not content with fulfilling the duties of justice and honesty, he performs acts of gratitude, charity, and compassion, which, however amiable in themselves, no man can exact. He not only abstains from injustice towards others, but even pardons the injuries of his neighbours against himself, as the indispensable condition of his own forgiveness from God.

Lord  
Kaimes's  
idea of uni-  
versal be-  
nevolence.

Lord Kaimes (*d*) maintains that the social affections are and ought to be narrow, in order to prevent extensive empires, so ill adapted to the happiness of individuals; and that universal benevolence weakens mens attachment to their country, "by dividing their regards for it among so many." But let me ask, how a wish of doing kind offices to every person, with whom we have any intercourse, can weaken our attachment to the public welfare? However extensive the benevolence of individuals, its actual effects must be confined to the small circle in which they move, and cannot operate universally. Could we even suppose it possible, that it should operate effectually, in acts of kindness to every member of a community, yet, even on that supposition, no evil could accrue to any government from such benevolent practices. Men shew their regard for their country by risking their lives in its defence, by obeying its laws with

(*d*) Book II. Sketch i.

cheerfulness, and by sacrificing their private interest to the public welfare: and such conduct is more reasonably to be expected from persons of enlarged and benevolent hearts, than from men of contracted sentiments, whose views are confined to themselves, their friends, relations, and neighbours. Even lord Kaims (*e*) admits, that the Christian religion is most useful in democratic governments; as it renders men less selfish, extends their regards, and tends to check luxury, avarice and ambition, so destructive to republics.

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The gospel forbids us to harbour malignant affections, and enjoins us to expel them from the heart as offensive to God, inimical to our happiness, and hurtful to society. Even the author of the *Characteristics*, who was no friend to religion, maintains that individuals become happy by the strength of the natural affections of love, complacency, good-will and sympathy with the species (*f*); miserable by the intenseness of the selfish passions; and superlatively miserable by the horrid affections of inhumanity, malignity, envy, misanthropy, tyranny, treachery and ingratitude. Lord Kaims also admits, that malice, envy, revenge, treachery, deceit, avarice and ambition, are noxious weeds, which poison society, and threaten a dissolution of government. This he

His opinion  
of the ma-  
lignant af-  
fections.

(*e*) Book II. Sketch iv.      (*f*) Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, Book II. Part II. Sect. 1.

does,

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does, in order to prepare his readers for the following paradox ; “ that the unsocial affections are beneficial to society, and productive of the most elevated virtues.” Were these removed, says this writer, all men might be just in their dealings, and their persons and properties secure from thieves and cut-throats ; but it could not be expected that theft, robbery, and other evils, should be removed without an extirpation of the unsocial affections. Take away these, and you remove all motives to action, and render man a timid and dastardly being : farewell then to heroism, magnanimity, and every noble virtue ; then would the most perfect in those virtues fall a prey to savages, like timid sheep to hungry wolves ; an uniform life of peace and security would not long be relished ; the golden age of the poets would be more poisonous to man, than Pandora’s box ; without an object to attain or avoid, the mind sinks into despondence and languor. The inhabitants of Paraguay and of the Torrid Zone, whose wants were easily supplied, were children in understanding. The former were fed out of a public magazine, had particular hours allotted for prayer, sleep, and labour, and were so timid and indifferent as to make no resistance to the Spaniards who destroyed their republic (i).” A strange argument to prove the unsocial affections useful to

(i) Book II. Sketch i,

mankind! Surely this writer did not consider, that S E C T. III.  
other nations, whose wants are supplied by labour  
and industry, are not subject to the languor of  
this indolent people. I can see no evil to which  
society would be exposed, were men entirely di-  
vested of the malignant passions of envy, malice,  
deceit, avarice and ambition. Were these abo-  
lished, individuals might still have sufficient incen-  
tives to active virtue from love, hope, fear, grati-  
tude, from the necessary supply of their wants,  
and the gratification of their appetites. The gos-  
pel does not require men to extinguish the social  
affections, but to regulate and direct them to their  
proper objects: Christianity forbids no rational  
enjoyment, and restrains no pleasures but those  
that are pernicious; curbing only the excursions  
of the licentious, and confining their wanderings  
within their proper channel; like the banks of a  
river, which both direct the current and prevent  
its overflowing, without stopping its progress or  
retarding its course.

Pollio, who suffered for religion in the year 304, Bolingbroke approves of the moral system of Christians.  
furnished an excellent abridgment of Christian  
morality, as taught and practised by primitive  
Christians. Being accused, before the governor  
Probus, of deriding the gods of wood and stone  
adored by Heathens, he confessed himself a Chris-  
tian, who, in spite of tortures, would persist in  
fidelity to God, and in obedience to the com-  
mands of Jesus Christ. Probus having then ask-  
ed,

SECT. III. ed, what those commands were? Pollio replied  
 in the following manner: "Those commands teach us, that there is but one God in heaven; that wood and stone cannot be called gods; that we must correct our faults by repentance, and persevere inviolably in the good we have embraced. Virgins who maintain their purity are exalted to an high rank; and wives are bound to preserve conjugal chastity, and to make the procreation of children the sole end of the liberties they take with their husbands. Masters ought to rule over their servants with mildness, and servants to discharge their duty rather from love than fear. We ought to obey kings and the higher powers when what they command us is just and right. We should reverence those who gave us life, love our friends, forgive our enemies, bear an affection towards our fellow-citizens, humanity towards strangers, pity towards the poor, and charity towards all men. We must do no injury to any one, and suffer with patience the wrongs which we receive. We ought to bestow our own goods with liberality, and not covet those of others; and believe that he shall live eternally, who, in defence of his faith, shall despise this momentary death, which is the utmost effort of your power (*k*)."  
 So sublime is the morality taught by the gospel, that even lord Bolingbroke speaks of it with approbation, in different passages of his writings.

(*k*) Broughton's Dictionary, Art. Christians.

"No religion ever appeared in the world, says <sup>SECT. III.</sup> this gainfayer, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind, as the Christian (l)."—"The system of religion recorded by the Evangelists is a complete system, to all the purposes of true religion, natural and revealed (m)." "The Gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, benevolence and universal charity (n)." Supposing Christianity to have been purely an human invention, it had been the most amiable, and the most useful invention, that was ever imposed on mankind for their good. He even asserts, that "genuine Christianity is the word of God confirmed by miracles, and that it has all those proofs, which the manner in which it was revealed, and the nature of it allowed it to have (o)." Such is this writer's testimony of the excellence and truth of the Christian system, though contrary to the general spirit and design of his works!

The Gospel not only points out mens duty, but furnishes motives to the practice of it, far transcending any thing known either to Jews or Gentiles. Its rewards are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive; and its penalties are eminently calculated to terrify offenders. The terror

Gospel motives to obedience preferable to any other.

(l) Analysis of Bolingbroke, Sect. 12.

(m) Ibid.

(n) Ibid.

(o) Ibid.

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of punishments is in a proportion compounded of their certainty, duration and intenseness. As to the certainty of a future state, Mr. Gibbon (q) admits, that the sagacity of Pagans pointed out but feebly the desire, the hope, or at most the probability of it; and that Sages, who argued for it, could not avoid expressing doubts concerning it: But the Christian revelation has removed all doubt, by such arguments as have hitherto defeated the attacks of artful gainfayers. With respect to the intenseness of future punishments, both Pagans and Christians are equally in the dark; the threats of both being but figurative. The former describe the tortures of hell as inflicted by Furies, Phlegethon, Styx, Cocytus, &c. and the latter by the gnawings of a worm that never dieth, and the burnings of a fire that is never quenched: expressions which are to be considered as types of severe, though undefined punishments. As to the duration of them, unassisted reason is silent; but revelation affirms them to be endless, to the great discouragement of vice and immorality. To restrain from crimes, the evil to be apprehended from the commission of them, should repel more powerfully than the expected pleasure or profit can attract; the discouragement should more than equal the temptation. But future punishments, like other distant objects, would ap-

(q) Roman Empire, Chap. xv.

pear but small and inconsiderable, did not the S E C T. III. eternity of them reduce the value of temporal advantages, which are of so short a duration. We are not however to conclude, that the Christian religion presents despair to sinners; since it offers pardon, mercy, and endless bliss, upon real repentance and reformation of life; without which they can have no claim to mercy, but are themselves instruments of their own condemnation.

The detestable practices of unpolished states, Practices of barbarous states prove the expediency of the Christian system. unenlightened by the Gospel, and strangers to its motives, prove the excellent tendency of the Christian system to prevent or remove them. I never peruse the history of those states, without regretting their ignorance of Christianity, which is well calculated to abolish those practices, and to compensate, in some degree, for defects of civil establishments. The Christian code would be highly expedient in uncivilized countries, to soften the rugged manners of barbarous tribes, and to remedy imperfections of their political institutions. The Jesuits, without any other laws but those of religion, kept the inhabitants of Paraguay decent, moral, and industrious. In this country, where the government was theocratical, men discharged the several duties of their respective stations, without any regard to civil penalties; uninfluenced by any motive, except future punishments and reverfionary compensations. Their obedience was religious, not compulsory; and of-

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fenders were often known to confess their faults voluntarily, and even to solicit punishment from the magistrate, to quiet their consciences (†). Such has been the efficacy of the Christian religion, when duly inculcated on the hearts of its professors! I admit that other nations might not be as tractable as the people of Paraguay; but maintain, that the same principle, which kept these in perfect order without the assistance of human laws, might restrain, in some degree, the ferocity of the most savage. Gospel tenets, forcibly impressed on the minds of barbarians, must check cruelty and revenge, and abate, if not entirely abolish, customs incompatible with the doctrines of Christianity.

The Gospel  
tends to  
abate the  
evils of re-  
venge a-  
mong Bar-  
barians.

The mild and forgiving spirit, inspired by the Gospel, would be highly useful among barbarous tribes, who have no laws to direct them, but such as are imperfect. Among individuals and tribes, unrestrained by law or gospel, the spirit of revenge is implacable; and they observe no moderation in the return of injuries. Revenge is the first maxim instilled into the minds of children, by the natives of America; this destructive principle influences their whole lives, and they wreak their vengeance even on sticks, stones, and other inanimate bodies. In consequence of this passion, injuries are never forgotten, nor expiated among

(†) Resnal's Settlements, Vol. II. Book iv.

the American tribes, but by the death of the offender. Their resentment might be dissembled or suppressed for a time, but never is extinguished. Members of religious and well regulated societies, usually contend for honour or territory, and generally terminate their wars, when those ends are obtained, while savages fight to destroy their enemies, and are never satisfied until they have entirely extirpated them. To appease the fell spirit of revenge, they devour prisoners taken in war, and sometimes employ various instruments of torture. Some burn the limbs of a captive with red hot iron; some mangle his body with knives, tear his flesh from the bones, pluck out his nails by the roots, and rend and twist his sinews. When under the dominion of this passion, says the historian, man becomes the most cruel of animals; he neither pities, nor forgives, nor spares (s). Had the gospel been preached to, and duly inculcated on the minds of barbarous tribes, the vindictive spirit would never have become the ruling principle, nor been productive of such direful effects to themselves or others.

The Christian institution is well calculated to abolish the various cruelties and murders committed in uncivilized countries. The savages of Brazil (t) in South America, devoured their captives;

Cruelty and murder among uncivilized states.

(s) Robertson's America, Book iv.

(t) Refnel, Vol. II. Book v.

S E C T. and in Congo parents sold their children, and  
 III. husbands their wives, for toys and baubles (v).

The Hottentots, though hospitable to strangers, and affectionate to each other, used to bury children alive, or exposed them to be devoured by beasts of prey; while they left superannuated parents, in the middle of lonely huts, without comfort or assistance, to die of hunger or be devoured by wild beasts (u). In New Spain, they kept every 20th day holy, and sacrificed men; put children to death on the first appearance of green corn; did the same when it was one foot high; and repeated this barbarous practice, when it was grown to the height of two feet (w). In the island of Formosa, priestesses prohibited all women to bring children into the world until they passed the age of thirty-six; in consequence of which custom, infants were frequently murdered in the mother's womb. The inhabitants of this island looked on murder as a trifling offence, and this crime was compounded for, between the murderer and the friends of the murdered, for a few skins or other trifling articles (x). Doctor Robertson assures us, that over a great part of South America, they put to death aged parents, for the same reason that other savages do their children, from the

(v) Mod. Univ. Hist. VI. folio, Book XXI. Chap. xi.

(u) Ibid. Chap. viii.

(w) Ibid. Vol. V. folio.

(x) Harris's Collection of Voyages, Vol. II. Appendix, p. 40.

difficulty of subsisting them (y). "The Carib- S E C T.  
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bees were wont to castrate their children on purpose to fat and eat them; and Garcilasso de la Vega tells of a people in Peru, who were wont to fat and eat the children they got by their female captives, whom they kept as concubines for that purpose; and when past breeding, the mothers likewise were killed and eaten (z)." Were the humane tenets of the gospel inculcated in those countries, they would tend to abolish those barbarous practices, supply the want of salutary laws, and remedy defects of political establishments. I have argued for the excellence of the Christian institution from its tendency to check revenge, and abolish barbarous customs repugnant to the spirit and letter of the Gospel. This argument will acquire additional strength, when I shall have proved, that Christianity has actually abolished or abated cruelty, murder, and other crimes, in almost all nations where it has been promulgated. I do not affirm, that it has produced its natural fruits in all cases, in those countries which have embraced its tenets; but maintain, it has done so in numerous instances, and that, where it has been opposed, the violation of its precepts has involved kingdoms and individuals in misery and distress.

(y) Hist. of America, Book IV.

(z) Locke's Essay, Book I. Chap. iii. Sect. 9.

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Excellence  
of the gos-  
pel proved  
from the  
bad effects  
of violating  
its precepts  
in Peru and  
other  
places.

If we appeal to the History of all Nations, we shall find that the miseries, which they experienced, arose from actions diametrically opposite to the spirit and letter of the gospel: from avarice, oppression, luxury, and dissoluteness. Every man's reading will furnish instances of revolutions and troubles, arising from abuses of power, and from breaches of the laws of the Christian system. The history of mankind proves, beyond a doubt, that princes who have acted contrary to the genius of the gospel, and the interest of their subjects, were liable to plots and conspiracies, and their kingdoms to civil discord and frequent revolutions. I shall now exhibit the bad effects arising from the cruelty, avarice, and oppression of some professors of the gospel, for the purpose of exposing nominal Christians, and shewing the excellent tendency of that institution, the observance of whose precepts would effectually prevent or remove those inconveniences. When the Spaniards first visited Hispaniola, the natives considered them as beings of a superior order, the noise of their artillery as a sound from heaven, and paid them homage, bordering on adoration. Yet such were the cruelties exercised towards them, in the absence of Columbus, that they were provoked to resistance; and this adventurer, though disposed to humanity, exacted such heavy tribute from them on his return from Spain, that, in order to starve their oppressors, they entered into a resolution

tion of sowing no maize. On inaccessible mountains, to which they fled, they experienced the inconveniences of famine; and our historian (a) assures us, that more than a third of this unfortunate people perished on this occasion. The Spaniards considered them born for servitude, and imposed such hard tasks on them, that many sunk under the fatigue, while some ended their days by a violent hand. Nor was the conduct of adventurers less cruel, impolitic, or repugnant to the tenets of christianity in other parts of America, than it was in Hispaniola. In Mexico, Cortés put Guatimozin to death, and burned in one province sixty Caziques, and four hundred nobles of that country (b). When Pizarro landed at Peru, Valverde his chaplain, required the Inca to embrace christianity, and acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Pope, and king of Castile. The Inca, having heard no arguments to induce him to renounce his religion, flung the breviary, which Valverde reached him, with disdain to the ground. The enraged Monk, a fit chaplain to the bloody Pizarro, cried out, "To arms; the word of God is insulted; avenge the profanation." These words served as a signal for slaughter; Pizarro attacked the Peruvians, seized their Inca or monarch, and killed many of his nobles, who attempted to save him (c). In consequence of

(a) Robertson's America, Book II.

(b) Ibid. Book V.

(c) Ibid. Book VI.

S E C T. III. the avarice and cruelty of adventurers, in different parts of America, multitudes fell victims to the discipline and hardiness of Spaniards; tasks were imposed on others, to which their strength was unequal; many perished by famine; and not a few sunk under the fatigue of carrying the baggage and provisions of their invaders, in their various expeditions. In some places, the natives were required to quit the valleys and fruitful plains, and repair to mountains in search of mines. The change from fertile to barren soil, hard labour, scanty or unwholesome food, and the despondence arising from their wretchedness, all contributed to thin those countries of their ancient inhabitants (*d*). Planters in those countries have felt experimentally the bad effects of violating the gospel; being obliged annually to import slaves from Africa, at a considerable expence, to work their mines and cultivate their plantations (*e*). As men naturally hate the religion of their oppressors, the Indians were averse from embracing it; and Acosta (*f*), who laboured for fifteen years in converting the Peruvians, confessed he found no greater obstacle to the progress of that work, than the impiety and immorality of nominal Christians. Resnel affirms, that avarice

(*d*) Robertson's America, Book VIII.  
 Settlements, Vol. II. Book III.

(*e*) Resnel's  
 (*f*) De Procuranda

Indorum Salute, Lib. II. Cap. xviii.

was the motive that influenced those men: that they were less cruel in places where they had no mines; and that many of them were malefactors, and so ignorant of the gospel, that they vowed to massacre twelve of those wretches daily in honour of the twelve apostles. The court of Spain enacted humane laws for the protection of the Indians, and were reprehensible only for sending criminals from their prisons, to people infant colonies, where sobriety, industry and justice, should be exhibited to the natives.

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A learned and humane prelate (g) assures us, that above four hundred thousand human creatures are sunk in the profoundest ignorance, in the British colonies of the West Indies. In those islands the planter, notwithstanding the endeavours of the society for propagating the gospel, treats his slaves with cruelty, totally regardless of the culture of their minds. In consequence of their degraded condition, they are grossly immoral, strangers to truth, honesty and fidelity; in constant need of the lash, and frequently conspire against their inhuman task-masters. This prelate, and other learned English divines, have maintained, that these men, if indulged with a moderate share of liberty, might have become honest, faithful and cheerful labourers, instead of being vicious, treacherous and dangerous slaves. The Portuguese, on the contrary, have treated their

Bad effects  
of violating  
the gospel  
in the West  
and East In-  
dies.

(g) Porteus, Serm. XVII.

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III. American subjects with humanity, and even indulged the Brazilians with civil liberty; an example worthy the imitation of other nations in Europe (*h*). The French and Spaniards also treat their negroes with tenderness, instruct them in religion, and have enacted humane laws for the protection of their slaves. In consequence of this gentle treatment, the negroes in the French and Spanish colonies are more decent, honest and industrious, than those of the English; who are treated with severity, and untutored in the gospel. The slaves in the English West-India islands hate their haughty masters, who rarely smile upon, or speak to them familiarly; while they love the French, who are less haughty and severe (*i*). Such are the effects of irreligion and inhumanity, that the inhabitants of St. Domingo, at the arrival of Drake, in the harbour of that town, formed the desperate resolution of having no intercourse with their wives, in order to prevent their having children subject to oppression (*k*). In consequence of the cruelties exercised by Europeans in general, on the ancient inhabitants of the Caribbee islands, the natives were almost extirpated, and planters are obliged to purchase slaves from Guinea and the slave coast. The separation of those wretches from their friends renders them indolent and

(*h*) Refsal, Vol. II. Book V.  
Book II.

(*i*) Ibid. Vol. III.  
(*k*) Ibid. Vol. II. Book IV.

desponding; and the hardships they endure in the <sup>S E C T.</sup> plantations, exhaust their health, and shorten their <sup>III.</sup> lives. The hard labour required of negroe women procures abortions, or prompts them, from compassion or revenge, to sacrifice their children, to save them from the cruelty of oppressive masters (l). English planters have, in many instances, been punished for their cruelty to their West-India slaves, with rebellion and massacre. The negroes of Jamaica, grown desperate by hardships, sometimes murdered their masters, set fire to their plantations, fled to inaccessible mountains to escape their cruelty, and have been known to elude their oppression by a voluntary death (m). When the enemies of England landed at St. Kitt's, during the war with America, the negroes of that island refused their assistance; whereas, if treated with humanity, they would have cultivated the plantations with cheerfulness, not have harassed their masters by revolts and insurrections, and have assisted in repelling hostile invaders. Hence it appears to be the interest as well as duty of princes to practise mildness and moderation towards their subjects, and of planters, in the islands, to treat their slaves with gentleness and humanity. Did planters practise the gentle precepts of the gospel, they would have had sufficient hands to cultivate the soil; but by violating its tenets, they have

(l) Refnal, Vol. III. Book II.  
Book V.

(m) Ibid. Vol. III,

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almost destroyed the ancient inhabitants, and deprived their mother country and themselves of the fruit of their labour. Such were the effects of cruelty on the natives and slaves in the English colonies, that when missionaries attempted to convert them, from a view of the happiness offered by the gospel, those wretches have made a natural observation, that they cannot be persuaded we wish them a place in heaven, when we refuse them either peace or happiness on earth (*n*). In the East Indies, extortion and rapacity have rendered the English government odious to the peaceable Gentoos, armed the Indian tribes against it, and makes them averse from the reception of their religion. In the British house of commons, in the year 1783, it was generally agreed on, by those who opposed and supported Mr. Fox's bill, that the Indians were treated with cruelty, and robbed and murdered by the servants of the company. In the upper house also, several lords maintained the necessity of restraining the rapacity and delinquency of men, who committed acts disgraceful to the English name, and even to humanity. It is much to be lamented, that the British parliament, so eminent for wisdom, have not hitherto exerted themselves, in defence of their injured fellow-creatures; oppressed by adventurers, generally destitute of religion and virtue.

(*n*) Account of the Society for propagating the gospel.

Refnal

Resnal (o) assures us, that these men purchase S E C T.  
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 their employments, in order to make the most of  
 them; and as they hold them only for a few years,  
 their impatience to acquire wealth totally over-  
 rules every other principle. The conduct of these  
 plunderers furnishes a striking example of the bad  
 effects of irreligion and anarchy; and proves the  
 expediency of both divine and human laws to  
 restrain the passions of cruelty and avarice. Here  
 I must observe, that these men act contrary to the  
 spirit of the British constitution, and the common  
 feelings of humanity; nor have we any more  
 right to condemn the established religion of Eng-  
 land, because it does not restrain their avarice  
 and cruelty, than to inveigh against the constitu-  
 tion of that country and the feelings of humanity,  
 because some are so depraved as not to be influ-  
 enced by either.

We find, even in countries professing christi-  
 anity, the evils arising from breaches of its laws,  
 and from a corruption or perversion of the doc-  
 trines which it enjoins. In Denmark, where they  
 exercised oppression over the farmers, and even  
 bought and sold them with the lands which they  
 cultivated, the country was poor, agriculture little  
 improved, and nine parts of its inhabitants were  
 wretched and miserable (p). Sir John Davis as-

Effects of  
 violating  
 the gospel  
 in Denmark,  
 Ireland, Po-  
 land, and  
 Russia.

(o) Vol. IV. Book I.  
 Northern Kingdoms.

(p) Williams's History of

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fures us, that in consequence of the oppressions formerly exercised on the peasantry of Ireland, by the chieftains of that country, the natives were extremely addicted to idleness, being reluctant to labour for those possessions, of which they might be deprived by the rapacity of others. In other countries there are many inconveniences resulting from acts contrary to the genius of the gospel. In consequence of oppression, and a corruption of christianity in Poland, the inhabitants are kept in a constant state of servitude and bigotry. Their devotion consists in repeating prayers, by rote, to the Virgin Mary; and in hearing masses, one word of which they do not understand. Oppression has rendered them as lazy and stupid as the negroes in the West Indies; and Williams affirms, that two millions of freemen accomplish more work than six millions of slavish Poles, who want spirit and inclination to exert themselves in labour. Such are the bad effects of oppression and want of the humane spirit inspired by the gospel! This historian ascribes those evils to Romish ecclesiastics, who, in order to obtain property and privileges for themselves, inculcated passive obedience, and taught that kings are accountable to God alone for their conduct in the administration of public affairs. I shall not enquire whether this charge against the clergy is founded in truth; but maintain, that the crimes of the professors of christianity are not to be imputed

puted to this useful institution, but to the passions S E C T.  
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of men, or to ignorance, excesses, or corruptions of religion. Soon after the introduction of christianity into Poland, an act was passed, that all the teeth of those, who eat flesh in Lent, should be extracted, unless they paid for that indulgence (q). This act fully proves, that the Christian religion was deplorably corrupted when introduced into that country, and was afterwards employed to the purposes of avarice and extortion. In Russia, the peasants are slaves, subject to the absolute will of their lords; and experience evinces, that oppression, which is exercised in that empire, is as impolitic as it is adverse to the spirit of the gospel. Russian slaves sleep away all the time they can spare, after finishing their master's business, and providing themselves with food, fuel, and other absolute necessaries (r). Nor is oppression confined to the lower orders of the people: no person of any rank can quit the Russian empire without a passport, or send money or goods into foreign countries, without obtaining permission. In consequence of those restraints, no stranger wishes to settle in a country, where he may be deprived of his liberty and possessions, at the will of a tyrant; no merchant will give credit to those whose estates may be confiscated; and no man, whose spirits are sunk by oppression, will make

(q) Williams.  
Folio.

(r) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. XIII.

SECT.  
III.

any vigorous effort in the arts, or exhibit any work of taste or genius. It is not any particular precept of christianity, but the gentle and humane spirit of it, which is so adverse to oppression, and tends to inspire men with sentiments of tenderness. I admit that the Christian religion is professed in Russia by the Greek church: but the following facts fully prove, that it is deplorably corrupted, or misunderstood in that country. Russians deem it criminal to eat pigeons, as the Holy Ghost is painted in the shape of a dove: and a learned compiler (s) acquaints us, that they put into the hands of the deceased letters of recommendation to St. Nicholas, whom they consider as their chief mediator and intercessor with God. In this country, persons of quality are not buried for eight or ten days; during which time, the priest daily sprinkles the body with holy water; and at the grave puts into the hands of the deceased a certificate, recommending him for admission into heaven. The principal ecclesiastic of the place, and the confessor, sign this passport; and certify, that he died in the true faith, and acquitted himself to his confessor (t). These facts forcibly prove the people's ignorance of the gospel, and the necessity of true religion, to prevent the inconveniences of superstition, and the

(s) Ross's Religions, Sect. 14.  
Vol. XIII. Folio.

(t) Mod. Univ. Hist.

frauds practiced by Russian ecclesiastics, on the inhabitants of that empire. S E C T. III.

Among uncivilized tribes, strangers to political wisdom, the Christian code would be particularly useful in supplying defects of civil establishments, and abolishing the religious system of Barbarians; which is more cruel, more fraudulent, and upon the whole, more deformed and defective than in polished societies. That the precepts of the gospel would effectually remove the dreadful effects of Paganism, will appear from a view of Heathen practices totally repugnant to the tenets of christianity. Some of these practices will, doubtless, appear incredible to men who are strangers to the fruits of superstition; but the connexion of effects, with the causes which produced them, and the similarity of customs of divers nations, related by different writers, reasonably add weight to their several authorities. Even polished Heathen societies offered human victims to their gods; and were, on particular occasions, guilty of every abomination imputed to the uncivilized, except devouring their children. The people of Bagota (*u*) offered human victims to their deities; while the natives of Biafra worshipped the devil, and sacrificed children in honour of him (*w*). The inhabitants of Madagascar, who were addicted

Effects of modern Paganism prove the excellent tendency of the gospel.

(*u*) Robertson's America, Book IV.

(*w*) Mod.

Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. Folio. Book XXI. Ch. xiv.

S E C T.  
III.

to astrology, distinguished between lucky and unlucky days; and put to death all children born on the latter (x); while in Camdu, they prostituted their wives and daughters, in honour of their idols (y). The Giagas were taught by priests, that their tutelar gods were the spirits of blood-thirsty heroes or princes, who required blood from their votaries on account of the torments which they endured, in the next world, for want of it. This people imputed plague, disease, and every calamity, to the deities which they neglected; and hoped to avert their anger by hecatombs of victims. They ascribed the noise of winds, or the howling of wild beasts, to the thirst of the gods for blood; and butchered their fellow-creatures to avoid the disasters with which they thought themselves threatened. The actions of this people were cruel; as might naturally be expected from the deformity of their religious system, and their ignorance of the true God. In consequence of these doctrines, their conjurors sacrificed men and children, and educated men to arms, for the purpose of providing plunder and captives, and preventing the extinction of the human race. They fed on their captives; nay, devoured their own children, for want of food; and young persons were killed, every day, for the tables of grandees.

(x) Refnal's Settl. Vol. I. Book III.  
Historical Dictionary, Art. Tartars.

(y) Great

One of their queens, from a savage policy, enacted <sup>SECT. III.</sup> a law, that they should pound their children alive in mortars, besmear their bodies with the ointment, and bring up captives in their room: and this people, though extremely respectful to the memories of departed friends, yet had a total disregard for the sick, whom they suffered to languish without pity or assistance(z). Such were the effects of false ideas of God, and the want of that humane spirit inspired by the gospel, which might remedy those inconveniences, and supply defects of political institutions!

Pagan nations, involved in superstition, formed such absurd opinions of a future state, as led them to self-murder, and to other acts hurtful to individuals, and their respective communities. An idea generally prevailed, among ignorant tribes, that all who died required many necessaries in the other world for their comfort and accommodation. In consequence of this opinion, when a king or great man died at Guonia, the inhabitants buried wine and food for his subsistence; and his wives and slaves were slain to attend him. Besides this, one person offered a servant, another his wife, a third a son or daughter; and all these were put to death, and their bloody carcasses were interred together for the service of the king(a).

The gospel tends to remove the bad effects of false ideas of futurity.

(z) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. Folio. Book XXI. Ch. xiv.

(a) Rosi, Sect. 3.

SECT. III. At Casta, women got themselves buried, and in other places burned alive, with their deceased husbands (*b*). In New Spain, the officers and domestics of a great man were buried with him; and two hundred were sacrificed for the purpose of serving a departed prince (*c*). The fifty wives of the king of Java stabbed themselves, in five days after his death, as a mark of affection (*d*); and when the prince of Marava died, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, his forty-seven wives flung themselves upon the pile on which his corpse was burned, and were consumed by the flames (*e*). In the kingdom of Benin, they sacrificed several to the manes of a departed prince (*f*); and the inhabitants of the Grain Coast, though a civilized and commercial people, used to burn widows alive in the graves of their departed husbands (*g*). The widows of Bramins were obliged, by the laws, to burn themselves on the death of their husbands; those of other men did so, of their own accord, when they had no children (*h*). Even the Brachmans, or Indian philosophers, required multitudes of women to burn themselves alive with the bodies of their deceased

(*b*) Ross, Sect. 2.(*c*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. V.

Folio, p. 72.

(*d*) Ibid.(*e*) Martin's Lett. to

de Villette, quoted by Millar, on Propagation of Christianity, Ch. vii.

(*f*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. Folio.

Book XXI. Ch. xv.

(*g*) Ibid. Vol. VII. Book XXI.

Ch. xvi.

(*h*) Resnal's Settl. Vol. I,

husbands.

husbands (i). In some provinces of South America, a cazique or chief was interred with certain wives, favourites and slaves, to administer to his pleasures, or attend him in the next world (k). The Japanese worshipped an image with three faces, representing the sun, moon, and elementary world; and were persuaded, that there existed different paradises, to one of which each god carried the votaries who adored him. This persuasion induced some to drown themselves; others, to cut their throats, or fling themselves from precipices, to the emolument of priests, whose interest was solicited, to admit their favourites into paradise (l). From these and many similar instances, we may judge, that the gospel doctrine of a future state would, if duly inculcated on the minds of Pagans, remove the bad effects of opinions which are false, and contrary to its spirit.

The Banians have an idol, called Quiay-Paragray, which is carried in solemn procession in a triumphal chariot, attended by ninety priests, dressed in yellow sattin. Some devotees prostrate themselves on the ground, that his chariot wheels may run over them; while others throw themselves upon sharp iron spikes, fastened on purpose to the car; esteeming it an happiness to be

It tends to abolish austerities, and other effects of superstition.

(i) Hornbeck de Conversione Indorum, Lib. I. Cap. v. p. 32, quoted by Millar, *ibid*.

(k) Robertson's America,

Book IV.

(l) Ross, Sect. 2.

S E C T. III. mangled and wounded, in honour of their god (*m*).

In Japan, Amida and Xaca, the two ancient deities of the Xinto sect, are supposed to have led lives of mortification and austerity; and, being weary of this life, to have dispatched themselves here, in order to be deified hereafter. This doctrine has a considerable influence on the conduct of the Japanese, who frequently imitate their example, and voluntarily embrace death from discontent, or the ambition of being canonized (*n*). In Japan, they have a sect called Icoxus, whose founder, though a vicious person, gained such a reputation of sanctity, that his superstitious admirers annually celebrated a festival in honour of him; and came to his temple in crowds, early in the morning, from a persuasion, that he who first entered it was entitled to particular blessings. When the doors were opened, every person was so eager to be foremost, that several, in squeezing forward, were pressed to death in the crowd: some were even so zealous, as to prostrate themselves in the entrance, that they might be trampled on by the multitude (*o*). The East Indian Bramins have an idol called Ganga Gramma, in honour of which pagodas are erected, and festivals celebrated. At particular seasons, the idol is carried about in a chariot, and some devotees volun-

(*m*) Broughton, Art. Quiay-Paragray.  
Univ. Hist. Vol. IV. Folio, Book XVII.  
Art. Icoxus.

(*n*) Mod.  
(*o*) Broughton,

tarily undergo whipping; while others endure s E C T. pains shocking to relate. Two hooks are fixed to <sup>III.</sup> the skin of their backs, and by these they are lifted up into the air, where they act many apish tricks, though in exquisite torture. Others suffer a packthread to be drawn through their flesh in honour of Ganga; and some are so infatuated with zeal, as to prostrate themselves before her chariot, in order to be run over (*p*). The Fakirs, or Indian monks, exercise the greatest austerities; some have vowed to continue their whole lives in a standing posture, and have kept the vow; others never lie down, but continue standing, supported only by a stick or rope; some mangle their bodies with knives and scourges, on pretence of conquering their passions, and triumphing over the world (*q*). These men, like some nominal Christians, do not consider, that they were sent into the world for the purpose of discharging social duties, and not to live in idleness and self-torment, on the industry of others. According to the gospel institution, men are no more entitled to heaven, for negative virtues, than sticks or stones; and have no claim to future rewards, unless they imitate the example of Christ, who went about doing good; leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.

(*p*) Broughton, Art. Ganga Gramma.  
Art. Fakirs.

(*q*) Broughton,

There

## S E C T.

## III.

Effects of  
Paganism  
at Malabar,  
Narsinga,  
and other  
places.

There were several other bad effects of Paganism, which the gospel would have abolished, if established in the countries where they prevailed. At Malabar they imagined, that God resigned to Satan the charge of all worldly affairs, thinking the trouble too great for himself. They had an image of the devil, which they worshipped; and celebrated a jubilee every twelfth year in honour of it. At this solemnity, the king first cut off his nose, ears and lips; and after that hideous operation, closed the scene by cutting his throat, in honour of the idol<sup>(r)</sup>. The people of the two great cities of Bismagar and Narsinga, had an idol which they worshipped, and maintained by the gold, silver and jewels presented to its temple. They carried it in procession every year; and pilgrims and other devotees wished to be crushed to death by his chariot: some stabbed themselves; others tore their flesh in honour of the idol; and women prostituted themselves to get money for his maintenance<sup>(s)</sup>. At Panama they had an idol called Dabaiba, to which they sacrificed slaves; and the inhabitants of Tunia, near Panama, had another, called Chiappen, who was their god of war. Before an engagement, the votaries of this god sacrificed slaves and prisoners to his idol; and besmeared its body with the blood of victims<sup>(t)</sup>. The inhabitants of Tibet adored a

(r) Ross, Sect. 2.  
Art. Chiappen, Appendix.

(s) Ibid.

(t) Broughton,

ruddy youth, called the Grand Lama, who eat, <sup>SECT.</sup>  
drank, and resided in a temple cross-legged, with- <sup>III.</sup>  
out speaking a word. The Grand Lama appoints  
the king his first deputy, and nominates several  
other deputies, and inferior Lamas, to the admini-  
stration of the kingdom, it being beneath his dignity  
to be concerned about it. The government is a  
pretended theocracy; and all the dictates of the  
king are ascribed to the idol, who, doubtless, is  
but an instrument in the hands of the prince.  
The Grand Lama is purchased, when a child,  
from some peasant, and educated privately in the  
duties of his office. When grown old, and inca-  
pable of acting his part, he is dispatched, and  
another is substituted in his room, more fit for the  
employment. He is so honoured by Tartars that  
they mix their medicines with his excrements;  
and grandees hang about their necks, in a box of  
gold, a particle of his dried excrements, to pre-  
serve them from disasters(*u*). The Mexicans had an  
idol, called Quitzalcoult, which was worshipped  
by all persons concerned in traffic; and they exhi-  
bited a scene of cruelty that bore some resem-  
blance to that practised at Tibet. Forty days  
before his feast, the merchants purchased a beau-  
tiful slave, who, during that time, represented the  
deity, and was obliged to put on an appearance of  
mirth, and to dance and rejoice, while devotees

(*u*) Atlas, and Guthrie's Geog. of Tartary.

(*w*) Broughton, Art. Quitzalcoult.

**S E C T. III.** worshipped him. On the feast day, after adoring him for forty days, they sacrificed him, offered his heart to the moon, and then laid it before the idol. This idol was worshipped in a different manner at Cholula, where his devotees thought they pleased him, by fasting and drawing blood from their tongues and ears; and sacrificed to him five boys and five girls, before they engaged in any martial expedition. Such were the effects of ignorance of the gospel, and of the spirit which it inspires!

Effects of  
Paganism  
in North  
and South  
America.

The chief gods worshipped in North America, before the introduction of christianity, were the sun and moon, which the inhabitants honoured by singing, dancing, howling, feasting, and cutting their flesh. Different tribes differed from each other in their worship; the Canadians adored the devil; the people of Virginia and Florida the devil and a multitude of idols: they sometimes sacrificed children to him; and when he complained of thirst, quenched it with human blood (x). The inhabitants of New Spain worshipped the sun and idols, offered them the hearts of men for sacrifices, and drowned boys and girls in a lake, to keep company with its idol (y): but these bloody practices were abolished in those places when the gospel was promulgated among them. The South Americans generally worshipped the

(x) Ross, Sect. 3.

(y) Ibid.

sun, moon, and idols; and the devil in various shapes. In some places it was considered a mark of devotion to offer their daughters to be deflowered by priests: in Paria and Guiana, they sacrificed men to the devil, and to idols; and afterwards devoured them (z). The Mexicans exhibited their deities in temples, under the figures of serpents, tygers, and other fierce and destructive animals, which inspired the mind with gloomy and terrible ideas. They sprinkled their altars with human blood; sacrificed, in the temples, every captive taken in war, and employed various other means to appease the vengeance of their angry deities. Those exhibitions produced the natural effects on the minds of this people: they were incessantly engaged in war, hardened against every tender sentiment, and adhered to their superstitions, after they were advanced in policy and arts, and when their minds were enlarged in other respects (a). Every emperor, at his accession to the throne of Mexico, was obliged to make war for the purpose of obtaining captives to offer to the gods: the priests feasted on part of the sacrifices, sent part to the emperor and nobles, and complained, that the gods were perishing with hunger after a long peace (b). The people in general devoured the flesh of captives with a barbarous joy, nor suffered one of them to be

(z) Rofs, Sect. 3.  
Book VII.

(a) Robertson's America,  
(b) Resnal's Settl, Vol. II. Book II.

SECT. spared or ransomed. When an emperor or great  
 III.

man died, they put to death a certain number of his attendants, and buried them along with him, to attend him in the next world (c). Unhappy fruits of false religion, and of ignorance of the doctrines enjoined by the gospel! Barbarous tribes, it must be admitted, are free from several vices quite common in Christian countries; but their innocence arises from their condition, and their crimes from defective policies, from false religion, or ignorance of the true. The vices of the professors of the gospel arise from a civilized state; and no Christian can commit them, without acting contrary to his principles: while Pagans might perpetrate the greatest crimes, without remorse, and even in compliance with the will of their gods.

Some superstitions productive of gentleness among Indians and Peruvians.

We shall now perceive, that as the Mexicans were cruel and vindictive on superstitious principles, so the Indians and Peruvians were gentle and humane, from the tenets which they professed. The doctrine of transmigration, believed by the Indians, inspired that people with such tenderness, that they would not shed the blood of man or beast, as it might contain the soul of some departed friend (d). The inhabitants of Cambaia, who entertained this doctrine, dreaded to kill a gnat or worm, and redeemed condemned

(c) Robertson's America, Book VII.

(d) Resaül's Settä, Vol. II. Book I.

malefactors and sold them for slaves; nay, some redeemed even birds or beasts, appointed to be slain, and carried them to hospitals, if they were sick or hurt (e). The Peruvians adored the sun, as the source of various blessings, and a fit emblem of divine beneficence: goodness was the object of their worship, and therefore the spirit of their superstition was beneficent; nor did their principles allow them to perform any rites, but such as were gentle and humane. They offered to the sun fruits matured by his heat, sacrificed animals nourished by his influence, but condemned human sacrifices, believing they could not be acceptable to that beneficent being. Manco Capac and his wife, observing the veneration of the Peruvians for the sun, pretended to be his children, and delivered their laws in his name: in consequence of this pretence, the Inca, or Peruvian monarch, appeared not only as a legislator, but as a messenger from heaven; his sons were revered, as children of that luminary, and his precepts were received as the mandates of the deity. To submit implicitly to his authority, was the necessary consequence of a belief of his divinity; to oppose his commands, was considered as an act of impiety, as well as rebellion. Subjects cheerfully obeyed a being, supposed to be invested with divine power; and sovereigns kept up the opinion of their heavenly descent, by an imitation of the beneficent

(e) Ross, Sect. 2.

SECT. being, which they were supposed to represent;  
 III.

nor is there a single instance of a tyrant or rebel in Peru, during the reigns of twelve successive monarchs. The Peruvians did not fight to destroy, or to satisfy blood-thirsty divinities with human sacrifices; but to reclaim the vanquished, and to communicate their arts and privileges to them: they did not torture, nor insult their captives; but instructed them in their own tenets, that they might add to the number of votaries of the sun (f). Such were the happy fruits of gentleness and humanity! The Peruvians, however, who were so gentle and humane in their general conduct, yet inconsistently retained a practice which prevailed among the savage tribes of America. They sacrificed men and children for the health and prosperity of the emperor, or for success in war; offered children to the ghosts of departed friends; and if a father was sick, the son was slain, and death was solicited, to accept of the child instead of the father (g). When the Inca, or other person of quality died, many of his attendants were put to death, and buried in the same grave, that he might appear in proper dignity and splendour in the next world: on the death of Huano Capac, one of their monarchs, a thousand human victims were sacrificed and interred with him in the tomb (h).

(f) Robertson, Book vii.

(g) Ross, Sect. 3.

(h) Robertson's America, Book vii.

Heather superstitions were productive, not only of cruel rites and bloody practices, but of frauds and juggles of priests and impostors. All history, both ancient and modern, furnishes numerous instances of the credulity of the vulgar, who have so frequently been the dupes of knaves and impostors. The Pagan East Indians have an idol, called *Quenavady* (*i*), seated on a throne, behind a curtain; and draw back this curtain, when devotees come to worship him. The Indian doctors represent him as insatiable, and greedily devouring every thing that is set before him; and say, he dwells in a sea of sugars: to gratify this idol, he is constantly attended by two women, who are incessantly throwing sugar down his throat, with very large spoons. Artificers of all kinds invoke his assistance; some offer him the first fruits of their works, and all his worshippers think they must serve him thirty-six years, before they can obtain their petitions. In the kingdom of Arrakan, the inhabitants are superstitious, and their temples abound with idols, which they feed every day, and clothe in winter (*k*). In the kingdoms of Cochin-China and Tonquin, the kings, grantees, nobles, mandarins and literati, hold the doctrines of Confucius; while the common people devote themselves to the stupid worship of Fo, and allow themselves to be duped by their Bon-

S E C T.  
III.

Frauds in  
China, Arrakan, and  
other places.

(*i*) Broughton, Art. *Quenavady*.  
Hist. Vol. III. folio, Book xv. Cap. iii.

(*k*) Mod. Univ.

S E C T.  
III.

zas, who subsist chiefly, on their ignorance and credulity (*l*). These impostors have recourse to several tricks, to excite pity, and extort money from their bigotted followers; and, when the common arts of address fail, try what public acts of penance will do. Some sit on the highway, knocking their heads against flint stones; others set fire to particular drugs on their heads; and father Le Compte tells of a penitent Bonza (*m*), in a country town, who stood erect, in a chair thick set with long sharp nails; so that he could not lean any one way without tearing his flesh. As this Bonza was carried from house to house by two men, he besought the people to pity his condition; said, he sat in that chair, for the benefit of mens souls, and was determined never to stir out of it, until he sold all the nails, consisting of two thousand: each of these, said he, is valued at ten-pence, but there is an innate virtue in them, which renders them worth their weight in gold. The Chinese empire abounds with temples, monasteries and idols; and the Bonzas or priests feed those idols with the smoak of meat, wisely reserving the substance for themselves (*n*). The Bonzas require devotees to build monasteries for themselves, to erect temples to Fo, and to offer donations to these temples; and threaten to transform the souls of those, who refuse to comply, into rats,

(*l*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. III. folio, Cap. xv. and xvi.

(*m*) Broughton, Art. Bonzas,

(*n*) Ross, Sect. 2.

mules,

mules, and other animals. They offer marks of <sup>SECT. III.</sup> indignity to their idols, if they reject their petitions; but restore them to favour, when they have obtained the object of their prayer (o).

The Peruvians believed, that the souls of the departed wander up and down in cold, hunger, and thirst; and put gold and silver in their mouths in order to supply them with meat, drink, apparel, and other necessities (p). In Loango and other parts bordering on Congo, they worshipped idols, by various kinds of offerings and donations: the husbandman presented his idol with corn, the weaver with cloth, and every man offered such presents as belonged to his occupation (q). The idolaters of New Spain were lavish of gold, silver and jewels, in adorning their idols; and these ornaments, together with the money paid for the redemption of persons appointed for sacrifice, added considerably to the revenues of the priests (r). The Congoese acknowledge one supreme being, and a multitude of subordinate deities, who preside over winds, rain, drought, heat, cold, fish, fowls, animals, vegetables and other things, which tend to the happiness or misery of man. Their Gangas, or priests, place the exterior worship of them in genuflexions, prostrations, fumigations, and other superstitious rites; but chiefly in donations of food and apparel, which

Frauds in Peru, Congo, Loango, and other places.

(o) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. III. folio. Sect. 3.

(q) Ibid.

(r) Ibid.

(p) Ross,

con-

S E C T.  
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constitute their revenue. As these men are supposed to have a considerable influence with those deities, they are solicited to derive blessings upon the nation, to avert judgments, to cure diseases, and to undo witchcraft. In all these cases, they sell the favour of the gods to the laity at an exorbitant price; and pretend, that all calamities proceed from the anger of the Gods against apostasy, and those who encourage it. This was the chief stratagem by which they were enabled to keep their flocks from straying; and to fleece and tyrannize over them, in opposition to the princes, who wished to introduce Christianity, as a means of abolishing idolatry, and the authority of the priests: for the Shalone, or chief priest, had such an influence in the state, that the civil magistrate could not enter on any momentous business of war or peace, without courting him by presents (s).

Frauds in  
Whidah,  
Guinea, and  
other places.

In the kingdom of Whidah, knavish priests persuade the people, that from the time corn is sowed, until it is grown up, the snake, which is one of their Fetiches or inferior deities, seizes on young virgins and renders them delirious. To prevent this mischief, parents commit their daughters to the direction of the priests, during that time, at a considerable expence. The king and priests share the profits; and the former sends his

(s) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. folio. Book xxi. Cap. i.

own daughter to the hospitals, in order to carry <sup>SECT. III.</sup> on the imposture (*t*). The Negroes of this place were so superstitiously attached to their idols, that they massacred the English who ignorantly killed one of them, and slaughtered all their hogs, because one of these animals devoured a snake (*u*). At Guinea, if medicines fail in recovering the sick, the Negroes have recourse to superstition to remove the disease; and the physician, who is a priest, tells the patient that he has no chance of recovery, except by offerings to the Fetiches (*w*). These Negroes will not undertake any important business, without consulting their Gods; and the priests answers are usually such, as are most acceptable to the enquirer, and most likely to impose on the credulity of the simple. If his predictions are fulfilled, he is extolled, and receives liberal presents; if they are not verified by the event, the laity are industrious to find apologies for him; nor does the priest himself ever want an excuse to justify his failure (*x*). At Guinea, they held trees in great veneration, consulted them as oracles, and daily fed the tops of mountains with meat and drink (*y*). Negroes esteemed certain trees guardian Gods, assembled round them on festivals, sacrificed at the foot of them, and spent the rest of the day in dancing round them, to the sound of

(*t*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. folio, Book xxi. Cap. i.

(*u*) Ibid. Cap. xv.

(*w*) Ibid.

(*x*) Ibid. Cap. xvi.

(*y*) Rofs, Sect. 3.

**SECT. III.** music. The priest offered sacrifice to the Fetiches near a kind of altar, dipped a wisp of straw into a pot of a certain liquor, and sprinkled the people with this holy water (z). At Angola, they new clothed their dead, and buried with them meat, drink, and some part of their goods. They worshipped wooden idols, imputed sickness or other calamity to their displeasure, and imagined, that they appeased them by presents of wine (a). The Brachmans, or Indian philosophers, persuaded the simple, that the pagods or temples eat as men do; made their idols of a gigantic size, and furnished them with monstrous bellies, in order to induce men to make large offerings. If these offerings should be found insufficient for them, and their families, they assured the people, that the offended pagods threatened the country with some dreadful calamity, or that the gods would forsake them, because they suffered them to die of hunger (b).

Frauds in  
Japan and  
other places.

The Japanese priests inculcate very forcibly future rewards and punishments, the latter particularly: within and without their temples, they paint multitudes of devils, in the most horrid shapes and frightful attitudes, tormenting the souls of guilty mortals. Priests persuade the people that Amidas and Xaca exercised austerities, for

(z) Broughton, Art. Fetiches.

(a) Ross, Sect. 3.

(b) Bahour's Life of Xavier, Book II. Appendix to Religion and Learning of the Malabarians, by Danish Missionaries, p. 64, quoted by Millar, Cap. vii. p. 138.

the purpose of delivering their votaries from those <sup>S E C T.</sup>  
torments, by their voluntary sufferings; and these <sup>III.</sup>  
impostors, by prayers, mortification, and performing works of supererogation, pretended an interest with those Gods, which they sell to the laity at a moderate price (c). Jemma, judge of hell, according to the theology of the Japanese, sees the most secret transactions of men in a large looking glass, and is considered as inexorable; and yet it is believed, that if priests intercede for sinners to the God Amidas, and the relations of the deceased make liberal offerings to his temple, Jemma will be prevailed on to mitigate the punishment. In conformity to this opinion, the pagod is crowded with multitudes, from all quarters, with oblations in their hands, to redeem the souls of their friends from the torments of hell (d). The Japanese Mendicant friars practise the following ceremony, for the purification of souls; they write the names of persons, whose souls they purify, on chips, rub them with the branch of a certain tree, repeat a certain form of words, in a low voice, during the action; and are rewarded for the trouble of performing this ceremony (e). The Japanese have an idol, called Abbuto, which is famous for curing inveterate distempers, and procuring a favourable wind and quick passage by sea. To secure the good will of this idol, sailors

(c) *Mod. Univ. Hist.* Vol. III. on Japan. (d) *Broughton*, Art. Jemma, (e) *Ibid.* Art. Siegaki.

**SECT.** and passengers usually tie small pieces of coin to  
 III. a bit of wood, and throw it into the sea, as an offering to the God. The priests assure his devotees, that these offerings never fail to come safe to shore; however, the idol himself comes out, in fine weather, in a small boat, to demand tribute of all ships and boats that pass (*f*) by. These are inconveniences experienced in no country in which the Gospel is inculcated in its purity; though similar ones are exhibited, by those who have adulterated it, from motives of lucre. The Japanese have some obscene as well as fraudulent practices: to a brazen idol, hollow within, called Dabis, they annually offer a spotless virgin, who is instructed to ask of it some particular questions: a Bonza, inclosed within the idol, is the sacred interpreter of the deity, returns answers to the virgin, and usually debauches her. Egyptian priests formerly practised a similar imposture; by telling the male devotees, who visited the temple, that the deity required an interview with their wives; among which, the amorous priest chose the handsomest for his favourite (*g*). In Japan they have an order of Mendicant nuns, called Bikunis, who are generally beautiful, and allure passengers to their embraces in direct terms, or by lascivious gestures, as they travel through the country (*h*). Such were the effects of Pagan su-

(*f*) Broughton, Art. Abbuto.

(*g*) Ibid. Art. Dabis.

(*h*) Ibid. Art. Bikunis.

perditions and ignorance of the gospel! Some, S E C T.  
III. doubtless, will think it unfair, to judge of the influence of Paganism, from the conduct of men as ignorant of political wisdom, as of the precepts of true religion: but we have considered only those actions of Pagans which originated from superstition, and have argued from these, concerning the tendency of the gospel to prevent or abolish them. It should likewise be considered, that Mexicans, Peruvians, and others, whose superstitions have been described, do not deserve the name of savages; as they had cities, rulers, laws, subordination, and arts somewhat matured, though inferior to Europeans in all these respects (*i*).

The history of mankind acquaints us, that Pa- Frauds of  
priests  
marks of  
false reli-  
gion. gan priests have generally taken advantage of the ignorance of a superstitious people, to fleece and defraud them; and one grand effect of the Christian code is, that it enables any person, who studies it with attention, to detect fraud, and to judge with certainty, whether any religion is false, from the tendency of its doctrines. That system, whose tenets are calculated for the emolument of priests, and whose chief object is to gratify the avarice or ambition of any class of men, at the expence of the rest, is naturally to be suspected of falshood and fraud; while that institution, whose primary end is the good of mankind, in this world and the

(*i*) Robertson's America, Book VII.

next,

**SECT.** next, might possibly be dictated by God, for the  
**III.** benefit of his creatures. This is the test whereby  
 we can distinguish true from false systems of religion; this is an argument, which the plainest understanding can comprehend, as well as the most subtle and refined. The gospel of him, whose kingdom was not of this world, and whose doctrines are not calculated to advance the fraudulent designs of ecclesiastics, assists in discovering false religion, and tends to prevent or remove its pernicious influence: and though the Christian institution has not, in all cases, operated according to its tendency, yet has it done so in numberless instances, as will presently appear. The frauds of priests, arising not from true religion, but from the want of it, prove the utility of that institution, which is free from them, and which enables us to detect them. Gainsayers might as reasonably attribute the fraudulent practices of mountebanks and pettifoggers to the useful professions of physic and law, as impute the frauds of Pagan priests, or nominal Christians, to the gospel of Christ. In Hispaniola, and other parts of America, professors of physic were conjurers and diviners, who imposed by their tricks on the credulity of the people; these men ascribed diseases to supernatural influence, and performed incantations, sorcery, and several kinds of imposture, to cure their disorders (*k*). In the island of Madagascar, Ombi-

(*k*) Robertson's America, Book IV.

affes, who were priests, physicians and soothsayers, SECT. III. sell talismans, and other charms, to the rich, to preserve them from disasters (*l*). The Hottentots are of opinion, that all disorders are brought on patients by magic, and cured by magic; and have conjurers and wizards, who cherish the ignorance of this silly people, while they cheat and defraud them. They lay a diseased person on his face, beat him all over, and at last exhibit a bone which, they say, was conjured into him, and extracted by them, from his nose, ears, or other parts of his body. If a patient is not cured by a single operation of this kind, he undergoes several of them; and should he die under it, his friends only lament, that he was bewitched beyond the power of any one to relieve him, and that some more powerful magician, a foe to the deceased, had brought this misfortune upon him (*m*). However, we need not go as far as Hispaniola, or the Cape of Good Hope, to discover the bad effects of the frauds of quacks and empyrics; every country abounds with mountebanks, and it would be unfair to impute these bad effects to the medical art, but to ignorance or want of skill in that useful profession.

Having pointed out the good effects that would naturally result from an observance of the gospel, and the evils which have arisen from superstition

Difficult to ascertain the actual effects of the gospel.

(*l*) Broughton, Art. Ombiaffes.

(*m*) Sparman's Voyages, Vol. I. Chap. v.

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and breaches of Christianity, let us enquire how far its doctrines and motives have actually operated on its professors; and whether its fruits have been such as might reasonably be expected. In order to this, we should carefully examine its influence, in its primitive state, before it was adulterated and blended with human inventions; lest we should judge of it from its corruptions, and confound real with nominal Christians. It is difficult, if not impossible, to do justice to Christianity in the discussion of this subject; as its genuine fruits are gentleness, patience, benevolence, justice, temperance and purity of manners; virtues which are generally exerted in private, without noise or ostentation. The Man of Ross, celebrated by Mr. Pope, was a private character, which is likely to live to the latest posterity; and yet the name of this man, though possessed of many virtues, would be sunk in oblivion, was it not for the able pen of that elegant poet (*a*), who thus expresses himself, after describing those virtues:

And what? no monument, inscription, stone?

His race, his form, his name almost unknown?

Individuals in private life seldom engage the attention of the historian; his object is to record the actions of princes, warriors and statesmen, whose conduct has an immediate influence on the welfare of states. Were there no persecutions in

(*a*) Pope's Epist. III. verse 250.

the early ages of Christianity, and no accusations SECT. III. against its professors, we should be strangers to the names and virtues of saints and martyrs, and to the learning and endowments of the first apologists for Christianity. It shall therefore be the chief object of the remainder of this section, to point out the effects of the Christian system in improving mens morals in civilized states; and in abolishing barbarous practices in unpolished societies. How far it has answered these purposes will appear, by comparing mens moral condition before and after it was promulgated, and by taking a view of the errors and crimes which it was instrumental in abolishing, in different parts of the earth.

The Christian institution has had considerable influence on domestic happiness, in many countries, where its tenets were embraced. The gospel abolished polygamy, a practice repugnant to the intention of our Creator, who at first created one male and one female for social comfort, and the propagation of the species. A learned writer (b) maintains, that polygamy must, in a course of time, lessen instead of encrease population; and calculation evinces, that if one man has many wives, many men can have no wives, from the equality of males and females born into the world (c). In consequence of polygamy, perpe-

The gospel  
abolished  
polygamy  
and divorce.

(b) Doddridge's Lectures, Part III. Prop. 59.

(c) Derham's Physico-theology, Book IV. Cap. x.

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tual jealousies would subsist between the wives and children of one man; and partialities, which are unavoidable, must be a constant source of strife and discontent. For these, and perhaps weightier reasons, the gospel prohibited polygamy; and the first Christians, who understood the spirit of their religion, better than the author of the Thelyphthora, condemned a practice so destructive of the happiness of individuals of both sexes. Montefquieu (*d*) allows, that the climate of some Asiatic countries seems favourable to polygamy; while he censures the practice as an inlet to unnatural crimes, and unserviceable to parents, children, or human kind. Moses permitted divorces to the Israelites in some cases on account of the hardness of their hearts; and the Jews, in process of time, solicited and obtained them on the most trifling occasions (*e*). This abuse was grown so insupportable, at Christ's appearance in the world, that he absolutely forbade them, except for the cause of adultery. Pagan lawgivers (*f*) also allowed divorces on the most frivolous pretences, though with few bad effects, while rigid morals lasted in their republics: but when luxury had corrupted mens morals, the inconveniences of this practice were sensibly felt. Where separations were easily obtained, neither husband nor wife were solicitous to please each other; nor could parents, who were

(*d*) Spirit of Laws, Book XVI. Ch. ii. and vi.(*e*) Broughton, Art. Divorce.(*f*) Ibid.

likely to separate, unite cordially in the education SECT. III. of their children. According to the system of oppression, which generally prevailed, when the gospel was promulgated, the husband, instead of being the friend and protector of his wife, was tyrant over her; and the wife, as must naturally be expected, obeyed from a principle of fear, rather than of love, gratitude, or a sense of duty (g).

Before the promulgation of the gospel, the Roman customs and laws relative to slaves were cruel and severe; masters used to put aged, sick or infirm slaves into an island in the Tyber, and suffered them to perish without pity or assistance (h). At Christ's appearance, the majority of subjects, in the freest republics, groaned under oppression; and were doomed to drag out a wretched existence in hard labour, and to be transferred, like beasts, from one master to another. Slaves were not so severely treated until despotism was established in the Roman empire; before that period, several expedients were employed to mitigate the rigours of servitude, and lighten the burden. Some wise regulations of the Roman republic were a powerful restraint on oppression, while they were strictly observed; but when they were violated by contending parties, and liberty was subverted by the tyranny of emperors, then was the Christian religion ushered into the world, and the hardships

(g) Robertson's Sermon on the Propagation of the Gospel.

(h) Leland's Christ. Revel. Part II. Ch. iv.

S E C T. of servitude were eased, not by any particular  
 III. precept, but by the gentle and humane spirit infused by the gospel. I admit, that Christians carry on the slave trade, and that adventurers and planters enslave and oppress in the islands and colonies of the East and West-Indies. But is not the conduct of these men reprobated in Christendom? And have not many efforts been made to abolish the slave trade, so contrary to the genius of the Christian religion? The evils arising from violating the gospel prove its excellent tendency, and oblige us to lament that many of its professors are not real, but nominal Christians. The spirit of the Christian code condemns despotism, and all sorts of oppression; and no genuine Christian could be guilty of either. A writer, acquainted with the history of all nations, asserts, that moderate government is most agreeable to the gospel, and despotic to the koran; and appeals to experience, whether the former has not operated in a striking manner in restraining tyranny, and mitigating the rigours of servitude, in all countries in which it has been established. "The mildness so frequently recommended in the gospel, says Montesquieu, is incompatible with the despotic rage with which a prince punishes his subjects, and exercises himself in cruelty. It is the Christian religion which, in spite of the extent of empire and influence of climate, has hindered despotic power from being established in Ethiopia, and carried into Africa  
 the

the manners of Europe. The heir to the empire S E C T. III. of Ethiopia enjoys a principality, and gives to other subjects an example of love and obedience.

Not far from hence, may be seen the Mahometan shutting up the children of the king of Sennar, at whose death, the council sends to murder them, in favour of the prince, who ascends the throne."

—" Let us, continues this writer, set before our eyes, on one hand, the continual massacres of the kings and generals of the Greeks and Romans; and, on the other, the destruction of people and cities by the famous conquerors Timur Beg and Jenghir Khan, who ravaged Asia; and we shall perceive, that we owe to Christianity, in government, a certain political law, and in war, a certain law of nations, which allows to the conquered the great advantages of liberty, laws, wealth, and always religion, when the conqueror is not blind to his own interest (i)."

During the ignorance and barbarism which prevailed in Europe from the 5th to the end of the 11th century, in consequence of the irruption of Goths and Vandals, we find that the Christian religion, though adulterated by its teachers, and insufficient to abolish all the evils of the feudal system, was capable of abating them. In all states of Europe, during that period, governments degenerated into systems of oppression; subjects were

Its teachers preserved justice and checked warriors.

(i) Spirit of Laws, Book XXIV. Ch. iii.

**S E C T.** slaves to aristocratic power; perpetual wars subsisted between the barons; and at length all adopted the manners of their barbarous invaders. To check the martial spirit, so prevalent in those days, ecclesiastics interposed their own authority, and that of religion; councils prohibited hostilities, on pain of excommunication, and warriors were required to sheath their swords, in compliance with the gospel. The threats and exhortations of these men had some influence in restraining the violence of war, and absolutely suspended hostilities on certain days, and seasons consecrated to solemn acts of devotion (*k*). Mosheim assures us, that Christian princes exerted themselves in the 10th century in converting nations, whose fierceness they had experienced, in order to soften and render them more gentle (*l*). The Danes, who were originally a fierce nation, were rendered more blood thirsty by the doctrines of Woden; but we have the testimony of Resnal (*m*), that they were less cruel and fierce when Christianity was introduced into the northern kingdoms. History acquaints us, that modern warriors are less vindictive, and more humane to vanquished enemies than ancient heroes unenlightened by the gospel. The spirit of this humane institution has corrected the fierceness of war, and checked the rage of

(*k*) Robertson's View of the State of Europe, Sect. 1.

(*l*) Eccl. Hist. Cent. X.

(*m*) Settlements, Vol. II.

this barbarous practice. As the vanquished were sometimes condemned to servitude, men fought on both sides with that rage and ferocity, inspired by despair, and the apprehension of a defeat: whereas in Christian countries, where servitude is unknown, they have no reason to apprehend such consequences; nor are modern battles so bloody or obstinate as those among the ancients, from the gentle spirit inspired by the gospel. The British and Irish senates, in the year 1783, unanimously voted thanks to one of their commanders for his distinguished humanity, in saving the lives of the officers and soldiers of the enemy at Gibraltar. And as religion and its teachers checked the fierceness of warriors, so, during barbarous ages, the spiritual courts were more just in their decisions than civil tribunals. Civil courts, instead of restraining acts of violence, allowed of combats, as arbiters of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood; and judges required little more knowledge than a recollection of few customs relative to duels. The clergy remonstrated against the dreadful effects of trial by combat as unjust and adverse to the genius of the gospel; in their courts they appealed to maxims of equity and to the testimony of witnesses, and sometimes from one court to superior tribunals; while the determinations in the civil courts, however erroneous or unjust, were absolutely irrevocable. A celebrated historian affirms, that men were induced by the equity observed in spiritual

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S E C T. III. ritual courts, to reform or abolish martial tribunals; and that many excellent regulations were borrowed from the practice of ecclesiastical courts (n).

The gospel  
abolished  
barbarous  
practices.

If we consult the history of nations we cannot entertain a doubt, that men, who embraced the gospel, became reformed from several vices and criminal practices, common among Heathens, before it was introduced. Bardesanes, the famous Syrian heretic, observed, that the Christian code has been extremely useful in a moral and political view; since Christians of all nations have retained the virtues, and rejected the vices of the different countries, where it was promulgated. In Parthia, where polygamy prevailed, they are not polygamists; in Persia, they do not marry their own daughters; in Bactria and Gaul, they do not violate the marriage bed; nor do they, wheresoever they reside, yield to the influence of corrupt laws and wicked customs, familiar to others (o). By the laws of Zoroaster the Persians committed incest until they embraced the gospel; after which period they abstained from that crime, and observed that temperance and chastity, enjoined by its precepts. This people exposed the bodies of the deceased to be devoured by birds or beasts of prey, but abstained from this custom, and decently interred them after it was promulgated. Eusebius has

(n) Robertson's View of the State of Europe, Sect. 1.

(o) White's Sermons.

furnished a catalogue of abominable customs, some <sup>SECT.</sup>  
of which have been abolished by the gospel; and <sup>III.</sup>  
proves its professors to be free from several crimes,  
not even condemned in the Pagan world. Christianity was useful not only in its positive precepts, and the genius which it inspired, but also in delivering men from detestable practices, perfectly repugnant to the feelings of Christians. This learned writer assures us, that proselytes to Christianity no longer married their own mothers in Persia; nor in Scythia did they as usual eat human flesh, and sacrifice their children, prompted by superstition. The Massagetæ used to sacrifice their relations, and eat their flesh, when worn out with age; the Tibareni were wont to fling them down precipices; the Hyrcani and Caspians exposed them to be devoured by birds and dogs. These and such like cruel and inhuman customs prevailed not only among barbarous nations, but even among the Greeks, who were polished and refined. In Salamis a man was sacrificed to the daughter of Cecrops: and another at Chios was cruelly torn to pieces and sacrificed to Bacchus: three were daily sacrificed to Juno; and a man was dragged thrice round the altar in Diomedes's temple, struck by the priest with a spear, and sacrificed to Diomedes. The Greeks in general, before they went out to war, sacrificed a human victim; Aristomenes sacrificed three hundred together to Jove on that occasion; the Celtæ and

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Carthaginians used human sacrifices; and Italy was said to have been visited by calamities because the tenth part of the men was not sacrificed to the gods. In Laodicea a virgin was slain in honour of the Syrian Pallas; in Lesbos they sacrificed to Bacchus, in Phocis to Diana, and the Tauroscythæ offered up, at the shrine of the same goddess, as many as were driven to their coasts by winds or waves (*p*). It is unnecessary to multiply instances of cruelty among Pagan nations; ancient history abounds with them; and the second section of this work has already furnished many of this kind. It is admitted that human victims ceased in some of those places before Christ's appearance, and that animal sacrifices were substituted in their room: but these and other abominable customs were exploded, in many countries which embraced the gospel, as will presently appear.

It abolished  
the fights of  
gladiators.

The Romans, though a polished people, were cruel and blood thirsty before the promulgation of the gospel, and its establishment in the empire. The breaking of a glass, or some such trifling offence, was sufficient to provoke Vidius Pollio to cast his slaves into fish-ponds, to be devoured by lampreys. The effusion of human blood was their frequent entertainment; some of their fellow-creatures were set to fight with beasts, others to be devoured by them, and some to fight against

(*p*) Eusebii Præp. Evang. Lib. IV. Cap. vii.

each

each other (q). Lipsius assures us, that no wars SECT.  
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ever made such havock on mankind, as those games of pleasure, which sometimes deprived Europe of twenty thousand lives in one month (r). From the detestable practice of killing persons at the funerals of great men, arose another custom equally cruel and shocking to humanity, the fights of gladiators. The Romans, as if ashamed of human sacrifices, trained up persons to engage in voluntary combat, and to fight until they killed each other at the tombs of the deceased. This was the origin of those bloody shows afterwards so delightful to the people of Rome: these were the amusements, with which the principal magistrates of Rome, and afterwards the emperors, entertained the citizens, and by which they acquired popularity among the people of that city. Julius Cæsar presented three hundred and twenty pair of gladiators; even the worthy Titus exhibited a show of gladiators, and Trajan, though not cruel in other respects, furnished another display, where one thousand pair of gladiators were exhibited on a theatre, for the entertainment of the spectators (s). In all those spectacles, every pair of combatants was matched and pitted against each other, and obliged to maim and murder, in cold blood, those who never had offended them. The passion for

(q) Hackwell's Apology, Book IV. Ch. iv. Sect. 7.

(r) Ibid. Sect. 8.

(s) Kennet's Antiq. Book V. Part II. Chap. iv.

**SECT.** **III.** these bloody encounters rose to such an height, that senators and knights turned gladiators; and even women engaged in them, under Nero and Domitian. These champions became formidable by their numbers; and one of them had the boldness to proclaim war against the Roman state. In sword-fights, the spectators did not so much praise skill in defence, as undauntedness in inflicting or receiving wounds; were displeased with the fencers, unless one of them was presently slain, were impatient of delays, as if they thirsted for blood; and carefully examined those who lay weltering in blood, lest they should deceive by a feigned death (t). Christian divines soon exercised their pens against these practices; Constantine the Great restrained them by edicts, and the emperor Honorius entirely abolished them (v).

It rendered  
Britons,  
Scots, Gauls  
and Irish  
less barbarous.

The following instances may evince the utility of Christianity in banishing idolatry, and barbarous practices from some countries, where it did not immediately produce virtue, among converts to the gospel. The Gauls and ancient Saxons employed various absurd methods of discovering, whether persons suspected of any crime were innocent or guilty. Sometimes the person accused was obliged to engage in single combat, to prove his innocence; and both priests and people prayed in silence, during the combat, that the inno-

(t) Hackwell, Book IV. Chap. iv. Sect. 9.

(v) Ibid. Sect. 10.

cent might be victorious. Sometimes he was <sup>SECT. III.</sup> forced to the disagreeable alternative of grasping red hot iron, or acknowledging himself guilty; sometimes, to walk blind-folded and bare footed over red hot ploughshares, placed at certain distances; and sometimes, to thrust his arm into boiling water. In all these cases, he was judged innocent or guilty, according to the effects which these trials produced. In some instances, a person was flung into a river with a rope about his arms; if he staid at the bottom, until he was drawn up, he was looked on as innocent; but if he floated, he was considered as criminal. These four sorts of ordeal lasted for a considerable time, after the introduction of Christianity, but were abolished by a decree of pope Stephen II. as impious and unjust, and frequently exposing the innocent to manifest hazard (u). It is generally admitted, that the Irish were extremely fierce and barbarous, before the time of St. Patrick, and that their ferocity was somewhat abated after that primitive Christian preached the gospel among them. St. Jerome tells us, that the Scots adopted Plato's community of wives, and had their appetites no better regulated than those of beasts; that the Attacotti, a people of Britain, eat human flesh, and reckoned the haunch of a shepherd or the

(u) Hackwell, Book IV. Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

**sect.** breast of a woman, a delicious repast (*w*). Whether the Attacotti were a people of Scotland or not, let antiquarians determine; my object is only to prove, that some nations of Britain were extremely barbarous, before the Christian code, that softener of manners, was published among them. Gildas (*x*) the Wise affirms, that Britons, before they were civilized by the gospel, were rude, barbarous, and impure in their manners, sacrificed human victims, and that their idols were more numerous than the idols of Egypt. Collier is of opinion, that the inhabitants of Great Britain were extremely cruel, before the introduction of Christianity, and sounds his opinion on the following facts. In Gaul, before that period, the druids managed the sacrifices, interpreted omens, and directed all matters relative to their superstitions. In times of public distress, they offered animal sacrifices, and in case of sickness or other calamity, which befel individuals, they required human victims to appease their deities. Their idols were hollow and capacious, and in them they placed wretched victims, and burned them to death. They generally sacrificed thieves, robbers, or other criminals; but where they were not supplied with a sufficient number of these, they sacri-

(*w*) Hieronymus adversus Jovinianum, Lib. II. Edit. Paris, 1706, p. 201.

(*x*) De excidio Britanniz.

ficed the innocent. Cefar (y) gives this account S E C T.  
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of the Gallic druids, and acquaints us, that these  
borrowed their superstitions from those of Britain;  
whence the ecclesiastical historian fairly concludes,  
that the Britons were as superstitious in their wor-  
ship, and as barbarous in their manners, as the  
Gauls; and strengthens his conclusion by the au-  
thority of Tacitus, who affirms, that in the isle of  
Anglesea druids used to sacrifice prisoners taken in  
war, and put persons of both sexes to death, for  
the purpose of inspecting their entrails, and prying  
into futurity (z). This rough people were soften-  
ed in their manners, and human sacrifices exploded  
in Great Britain, Gaul, and other places, by the  
promulgation of a code, whose spirit is so adverse  
to cruelty and bloodshed.

We are furnished with additional proofs of the It checked  
cruelty in  
China and  
Japan.  
real efficacy of the gospel, in removing the evils  
experienced from false religion, and the passions  
of mankind. The practice of exposing infants,  
and putting them to death, was so common among  
the ancients, that it is remarked, as an extraor-  
dinary thing, that the Egyptians brought up all  
their children (a). Puffendorf (b) affirms, that  
even in China the poorer sort sell and frequently  
put female children to death, with impunity; and

(y) De Bello Gallico, Lib. VI.

(z) Collier's Eccl. Hist. Cent. I.

(a) Strabo, Lib. XVII. and Diod. Siculus, Lib. I. Cap. viii.

(b) De jure Nat. & Gentium, Lib. VI. Cap. iii. Sect. 9.

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Potter (c) proves from ancient authorities, that among the Greeks even a poor man will not expose a son, and that a rich man will scarce preserve a daughter. This crime is prohibited in all countries, where Christianity is established, and men, impressed with its humane spirit, cannot think without horror on the execrable custom. Mr. Gibbon sometimes compliments the Christian institution, and its professors, when it answers his general design of subverting its foundation. In order to account for the increase of Christians and the progress of the gospel, by means merely human; he affirms, that pious Christians rescued multitudes of infants, who were exposed by their parents; baptized and maintained them, out of the public funds of that society. And yet these are the men whom he traduces, whose indiscretions he magnifies, and whose virtues he suppresses or endeavours to vilify! The historian (d) of the Roman empire admits, that above three thousand new-born infants are annually exposed in the streets of Pekin, of which number many have been preserved by the humanity of Christian missionaries. Mosheim (e) assures us, that the Japanese were easily prevailed on to embrace the gospel from the cruelty exercised by the Bonzas or priests towards the afflicted, compared to the benevolence and humanity of Romish missionaries.

(c) Antiq. Chap. xiv.

(d) Hist. Chap. xv.

(e) Eccl. Hist. Cent. XVII.

The Bonzas maintained, that the sick and needy S E C T. III. are odious to the gods, and thus prevented the relief of them by the affluent; while missionaries proved, that the good things of this world are often a curse, instead of a blessing, to the possessors; and that the favourites of heaven are often afflicted in this life, and compensated in the next. By such doctrines they, no doubt, inspired their new converts with benevolence; and prevailed on them to relieve the wretched and necessitous.

In the reign of the emperor Heraclius, Aman- It abolished human sacrifices and other cruelties in many places. dus Gallus converted the people of Ghent to the gospel; and destroyed the altars, on which they offered human sacrifices (*f*). In the province of Virginia, in North America, the inhabitants, who were idolaters, sometimes sacrificed children to the devil, before the Christian religion was published among them (*g*). In Mexico, their king Ahuitzol sacrificed sixty-four thousand and eighty men in the year 1486, at the consecration of a temple; and though human sacrifices be banished from those cities, converted by Spaniards, yet do the Indians perpetrate such abominable deeds in the mountains to this day (*h*). At Cholula, on the decease of a king a man was sacrificed, and in-

(*f*) Alstedius de conversione populorum, quoted by Millar, History of the Propagation of Christianity, Chap. vi.

(*g*) Harris's Collection of Travels, Vol. I. p. 815 to 848.

(*h*) Acosta's Hist. of Indies, Book V. Chap. ix. quoted by Millar.

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senior priests held the legs, arms and head of the victim, while the chief priest laid open his breast and pulled out his heart, to offer to the sun and idol: five or six thousand children were annually sacrificed to the numerous idols of this place, before the introduction of the Romish religion by the Spaniards (i). In Mexico they kept every twentieth day, which was the last of their month, holy, and offered human sacrifices; and on a certain festival drowned a boy and girl to accompany the idol of a lake. These abominable customs were exploded by the introduction of the gospel, and the spirit which it inspired. The Herulians, a people near the Danube, who were converted to Christianity in the sixth century, by the emperor Justinian, appeased their gods by human sacrifices; put to death the aged and infirm; and required the wife of an Herulian, who would be thought virtuous, to kill herself at the tomb of her deceased husband (k). The Abasgi, an idolatrous people of Scythia, were barbarously used by their princes, before their conversion to Christianity: these tyrants forced from parents such of their children as were beautiful, made them eunuchs, sold them to the Romans, and killed the parents themselves, lest they should revenge the injuries offered to their children. The emperor Justinian prohibited this custom, and appointed

(i) Acosta's Hist. of Indies, Book V. Chap. xx.

(k) Evagrius, Lib. IV. Cap. xix.

priests to instruct this people in the doctrines of S E C T.  
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Christianity, and to wean them from the idolatrous  
and criminal practices so usual among Heathens (*l*).

In Congo, before the king became a convert to the Romish religion, a multitude of his concubines and court ladies attended his corpse to the grave, and twelve of them were buried alive with him, while many more solicited that honour (*m*). In the kingdom of Metamba, subject to Congo, they used to put sick persons to death, on pretence of friendship, and shortening the continuance of their pain; and some idolatrous provinces of Angola fed on human flesh, and sacrificed a number of victims at funerals, until the Christian religion was introduced by the Portuguese (*n*). The Lithuanians, who were the last people in Europe converted to Christianity, celebrated a solemn sacrifice every October, in honour of their gods, and burned the spoils taken in war, together with one of the prisoners. This odious custom was entirely abolished, when Lithuania was annexed to the dominions of Poland; for when Uladislaus, great duke of that territory, married the Polish king's daughter, in the year 1386, and was baptised, he, assisted by the clergy, propagated and established Christianity in that country; on the ruins of idolatry (*o*).

(*l*) Evagrius, Lib. IV. Cap. xxi.

(*m*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. folio, Book XXI. Ch. 11.

(*n*) Ibid. (*o*) Hottinger Hist. Eccl. Seculum 14. p. 867.

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Before the introduction of the gospel into Germany, its inhabitants offered human victims to Mercury on certain days ; but refrained from this odious practice, when the Christian religion was published among them. Here it is worthy of observation, that this warlike people were induced to embrace Christianity from an opinion, that a religion is excellent, whose professors were victorious and successful in war. These men mistook the tendency of the Christian code, which was not calculated for extending conquests by war and violence, like the Pagan and Mahometan religions, but to render men happy and satisfied with their condition. Even some moderns have objected against Christianity, that the Roman empire was subverted after it was introduced ; but let me ask, whether any wise man would wish for the continuance of an empire, founded on violence and supported by despotism ? Whether extent of empire constitutes the happiness of a people ? And whether the Roman empire was not prepared for a fall, by the vices and corruptions of emperors, senate, and mass of the people ? But to return to the influence of the gospel, in abolishing the idolatries and cruelties of Pagan nations. The dean of Gloucester has, from Muratori, furnished a striking contrast between the manners of the unconverted and converted inhabitants of Paraguay. Before these Indians embraced the Christian institution, they were cruel and vindictive, had but little

It also restrained idolatry and cruelty in Germany, Paraguay, and Canary Islands.

little feeling for the distresses of one of their own SECT.  
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tribe, and not a spark of benevolence for the distressed members of any other. The missionaries not only civilised this people, and taught them the arts of industry, but even converted them into the most humane and benevolent of all inhabitants of the earth (q). The inhabitants of the Canary islands were gross idolaters, before the beginning of the fifteenth century; and killed and butchered strangers, and even each other, without mercy or compassion. Some flung themselves from precipices in honour of a deity which they worshipped; being persuaded that they should enjoy all sorts of happiness, after so noble a death (r). Christianity, when introduced into those islands by the Spaniards, extirpated these practices; though it was adulterated by its teachers, and blended with the lucrative inventions of interested men. The Romish religion, though a corrupt substitute for the Christian system, is averse from cruelty and bloodshed; inculcates that benevolence and humanity taught by the gospel, and has abolished many savage customs of idolatrous nations. Popish missionaries have been industrious in propagating their religion and making proselytes in Pagan countries: and it is but just to ascribe many good effects of the Christian code, to the endea-

(q) Tucker's Treatise on Government, Part II. Chap. ii.

(r) Millar's Hist. of the Propagation of Christianity, Ch. vi.  
P. 132.

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vours of men, zealous in extirpating abominable customs, while they held some maxims, which distinguished them from Protestants, whose influence shall be pointed out in the course of this work.

It diffused  
knowledge  
and abolish-  
ed some bad  
effects of su-  
perstition.

Besides the advantage of abolishing cruel practices in many places, the Christian religion has laid a foundation, for distributing religious and moral instruction; and been instrumental in kindling and preserving a spirit of erudition in many countries, where it has been established. The apostles were commissioned to preach to all nations, however remote in situation or different in language. Paul, who was peculiarly appointed for the instruction of the Gentiles, nominated Timothy and Titus for the same purpose; and authorized them to nominate subordinate ministers, as the gospel extended, and congregations grew numerous. If we compare this mode of propagating religious and moral instruction, with the limited operations of Pagan philosophers, and Jewish prophets and synagogues, we shall readily be convinced of the superior excellence of the gospel, in disseminating knowledge. The gospel, at its first appearance in the world, produced a group of apologists, whose works abound with various kinds of literature, which must have enlightened the minds of Pagans, and filled them with more rational ideas of God and virtue than they entertained before. Even philosophers, who did not embrace Christianity, could not avoid being improved

improved by those learned works, and by the spirit S E C T.  
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of the gospel, which was then read to gratify }  
curiosity, or for the purpose of refuting it. It is  
for this reason, perhaps, that the works of Seneca,  
Epiſtetus, Arrian, Plutarch, Hierocles, Simplicius,  
Plotinus, and other Pagans who wrote in the  
early ages of christianity, abound with more useful  
moral instruction than is to be found in the  
writings of more ancient philosophers. The  
Christian religion, by enlarging the mind, con-  
tributed to banish superstition, and abolish Hea-  
then oracles, which were a system of fraud, and  
a considerable expence to the Gentile world.  
These oracles were so numerous, that Hermippus  
filled five volumes with descriptions of them;  
Vandale furnishes a catalogue of near three hun-  
dred; and affirms, that they amounted to near  
one thousand (s). This learned writer denies that  
their silence is to be ascribed entirely to Christ's  
appearance, as Eusebius and other Christian  
writers were inclined to imagine (t). He admits,  
at the same time, that the gospel was the chief  
cause which enabled men to perceive their vanity,  
and the fraudulent practices which were the fruits  
of them.

As mens minds were enlarged and enlightened  
by the gospel, they were also preserved by its Its teachers  
preserved  
& advanced  
learning.  
teachers from relapsing into ignorance. When a

(s) Vandale, Dissert. II, de Oraculorum Ethnicorum dura-  
tione et interitu, Cap. vii.

(t) Dissert, I. de Oraculorum Origine & Authoribus, Cap. xv.

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love of science was succeeded by a love of arms, few had inducements to study arts and sciences, except men educated for the clerical profession: nor would erudition of various kinds have been propagated so universally, nor transmitted to our times through so many dark ages of war and violence, had it not been necessary for a knowledge of theology, and the works of the fathers. History acquaints us, that churchmen possessed all the learning of those times, handed it down in succession, and collected and preserved books, which must have inevitably perished, when a taste for literature was almost extinct, and the passion of the laity turned towards arms (*u*). The studies of men educated for the ministry have been of some importance to the literary world, and the foundation of their proficiency in solid and polite learning, in the subsequent part of their lives. The course of erudition, absolutely necessary for obtaining degrees in our universities, and for preparing young men for the sacerdotal function, is sufficient to introduce them to a moderate acquaintance with different branches of literature, and to try to which of them their capacities are adapted. We may appeal to experience, whether mankind are not indebted to learned ecclesiastics for new discoveries in arts and sciences, or for improvements on the discoveries of those who went before them. In the priesthood there have

(*u*) Minute Philosopher, Dial. 5.

been

been so many able writers on useful subjects, that it would require extensive learning to recite their names, and the advantages to literature derived from that order. These however are not the necessary but accidental effects of christianity, and not to be ascribed to the Christian code but to ecclesiastical establishments for the support and maintenance of the teachers of the gospel. The clerical order are an appendage of the Christian system, and absolutely necessary to maintain its purity, to confute gainsayers by their learning, and to prevent the bad effects arising from ignorance and perversion of the scriptures. Learning is the general consequence of a competent provision for the priesthood, and ignorance, among both clergy and laity, the natural and unavoidable effect of the want of regular or legal establishments. Were there no ecclesiastical establishments, teachers would soon degenerate; as few would sacrifice time and expence to study in colleges, on the bare prospect of being assistants to, or even masters of schools. If instructors of youth grow ignorant, a proportionable ignorance must soon prevail among their pupils; and we may easily judge of the consequences that might ensue. Were an ignorant laity freely to indulge their fancies on religious subjects, unassisted and uncontrolled by the learned, a nation might soon be stocked with fanatics and rebels; if they submit implicitly to ignorant teachers, without enquiry,

SECT. III. they might become dupes and slaves to impostors  
and tyrants.

The charity  
of Christians  
taught Pa-  
gans kind-  
ness to the  
distressed.

Juvenal, Tacitus, Sallust, and other Pagan writers, furnish abundant proofs of the corruption of manners which prevailed in Rome and other places when the Christian religion was published to the world; nor can it reasonably be denied, that it had a considerable influence on the hearts of its professors. The affection of Christians for each other was proverbial; and even Heathens used to say of them, how those Christians love one another! Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, spent his whole fortune in relieving the distressed, especially those who were shipwrecked on the coast (*w*). Cyprian sold his estate to relieve mens wants; and, while he laments the degeneracy of Christians, acknowledges that they surpassed Heathens in the practice of virtue (*x*). In the city of Alexandria, so many persons were appointed to take care of the sick, that Theodosius was under a necessity of limiting the number to six hundred; as appears from a law extant in his codes. Instances of the charity of primitive Christians, in redeeming captives, and founding hospitals for the poor, are too numerous to be recounted; nor can it be denied, that to the genius of the gospel, christendom is indebted for many pious and charitable establishments, little known

(*w*) Cave on Primitive Christianity, Part III. Ch. ii.

(*x*) Cyprian de Lapsis.

to the Gentile world. In cases where tenderneſſes S E C T.  
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and loving kindneſs were neceſſary, Chriſtians did not confine their bounty to thoſe of their own ſect, but were kind to all men, even to their enemies: for all men, as Tertullian obſerves, love their friends, but it is peculiar to Chriſtians to love their enemies, to return kindneſs for hatred, and to pray that their enemies might obtain mercy from God (y). Lucian bears teſtimony of their kindneſs to Peregrinus, a Pagan philoſopher, and makes a panegyric upon them where he intended a ſatire. “ Their legiſlator, ſays this humouriſt, has made them believe, that they are all brethren; they worſhip a crucified impoſtor, live according to his laws, and have all things common (z).” Another enemy to chriſtianity admits, that its profeſſors were more virtuous than Pagans; and that ſome, who did not embrace its tenets, were much improved by the example of Chriſtians. The emperor Julian, in a letter to an Heathen pontiff, deſires him to turn his eyes to the means by which the ſuperſtition of Chriſtians was propagated: by kindneſs to ſtrangers, by ſanctity of life, and by the attention which they paid to the burial of the dead. He recommends an imitation of their virtues, exhorts him to prevail on the prieſts of Galatia to be attentive to the worſhip of their gods, and deſires him to ſtrip them of

(y) Lampridii, Alexander Severus.  
Morte Peregrini, Paris Edit. 1615, p. 996.

(z) Lucian de

**S E C T.** the sacerdotal function, unless they obliged their  
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wives, children and servants to do the same. He also enjoins works of beneficence, desires him to relieve the distressed, to build houses for the accommodation of strangers of whatever religion; and says, it is a disgrace to Pagans to disregard those of their own religion; while Christians do kind offices to strangers and enemies. Whence it is evident, that Christians were improved in their morals by the gospel, and even Pagans improved by the example of Christians (a).

Gospel rendered its first  
 profelytes  
 true and  
 honest.

Primitive Christians were upright in their dealings, religiously observed oaths and promises, and observed the rule of doing unto others, whatsoever they would, that men should do unto them: a rule so excellent, that the Pagan emperor Alexander Severus ordered it to be proclaimed by a public crier, and written on the walls of all public buildings (b). "We deny not, says Tertullian, any pledge left with us; we defile no man's marriage bed; we piously educate orphans, relieve the necessities of the indigent, and render to no man evil for evil." They allowed or practised no acts of deceit or dishonesty; or if any were convicted of such crimes, the whole body of Christians protested against them. The following narrative proves the excellence of the Christian religion,

(a) Juliani Imperatoris Epistola 49, ad Arfacium Pontificem Galatiæ.

(b) Hist. Augustæ Scriptores, Edit. Paris, 1620, p. 132.

and the bad effects of the Pagan, on the actions S E C T. III.  
of its professors. In the sixth century, Al Noo-  
man, king of Hira, in a drunken frolic, ordered  
two of his intoxicated companions to be burned  
alive. When sober, he repented of his crime ;  
and, in order to expiate the offence, set apart two  
days every year in honour of them, and resolved  
to sacrifice, on one of these days, the first person  
he met ; and dismiss him whom he met on the  
other, with magnificent presents. On one of those  
unfortunate days, the king was met by an Arab,  
who had once entertained him when fatigued with  
hunting, and separated from his companions. In  
gratitude for this favour, the prince granted him  
a year's respite, provided he could find security  
for his returning from a distant province to suffer  
death at the expiration of the year. One of the  
prince's court, in compassion, offered himself as  
his surety, and the Arab was released. When  
the Arab appeared on the appointed day, the king  
asked him, why he would offer himself to death  
when he might have escaped it by the death of his  
security ? He replied, that he was taught to do so  
by the religion which he professed : the king,  
having enquired about his religion, and finding  
him a Christian, desired an explanation of the  
doctrines of christianity, embraced the gospel,  
pardoned the Arab, and totally abolished the  
barbarous custom (c). Hence it is evident, that these

(c) Sale's Preliminary Discourse, Sect. i.

SECT. III. doctrines had excellent effects in banishing inhumanity; and that the virtues of Christians were not confined to the first ages of christianity, but were practised by individuals, even in a country in which its precepts were deplorably corrupted.

It rendered  
them patient,  
constant, and  
chaste.

No dangers could terrify, nor threats, nor torments engage primitive Christians to desert their profession: they neither repined, nor railed at their enemies, but bore their sufferings with invincible meekness. Is it not, says the Heathen in Minucius Fælix, a strange folly, and incredible boldness, to despise present torments, and yet fear those that are future and uncertain? So foolishly do they flatter themselves, and lull their fears by a deceitful hope of some unknown comforts that shall arise to them hereafter! Tertullian ascribes the propagation of the faith, in some degree, to the patience of Christians: this apologist tells Scapula, that every person who beheld such eminent patience, could not but enquire into the cause, and when informed of the truth immediately embraced it (*d*). Collier furnishes a strong instance of the steadiness and inflexibility of Christians in the reign of the emperor Constantius. That emperor, to try the principles of his courtiers, and whether they were sincere or nominal Christians, pretended an aversion for the Christian religion, and commanded them to sacrifice to the gods, on pain of being dismissed. They, who

(*d*) Tertullian ad Scapulam, Cap. v.

were sincerely attached to the gospel, said they <sup>SECT. III.</sup> must resign their employments, and incur his displeasure rather than the divine, while others consented to offer sacrifice to the deities of the Pagans. The emperor, having made the wished-for discovery, applauded the former for their constancy and integrity, and admitted them to a share in the administration of the state, but disbanded the latter from his court, and severely reprimanded them, saying, they never could be true to their prince who were so false to their God (*e*). Even Mr. Gibbon (*f*) affirms, that “a caliph of the house of Abbas was heard to declare, that the Christians were most worthy of trust in the administration of Persia;” and that when the gospel was corrupted by its professors. Such was the constancy of primitive Christians, that Arnobius assures us, servants will rather suffer torments by their masters, wives sooner part from their husbands, and children prefer being disinherited by parents, rather than abandon the faith of Christ. The historian of the Roman empire bears testimony to the rigid morals of primitive Christians; and admits, that the most atrocious criminals became, after baptism, the most eminent saints, whose faults, or rather errors, were an excess of virtue (*g*). They could not be allured by promises, nor terrified by

(*e*) Collier Eccl. Hist. Book I.

(*f*) Hist. Rom.

Emp. Ch. li. p. 390.

(*g*) Adversus Gentes, Lib. I.

SECT. threats to violate their chastity; and Cave gives  
 III. instances of persons of both sexes who endured dangers and death rather than be guilty of an unchaste compliance (*h*). When you prefer condemning women to the fews to casting them to the lions, says Tertullian to the Pagans, you acknowledge that we look on the violation of chastity as an heavier penalty than any you can inflict. Some Christians ran into excesses in their ideas of chastity, and even made vows of perpetual continence from an excessive zeal, and from a mistake of the genius of the Christian institution.

It corrected  
 pride and  
 vanity;

Pagans were vain, arrogant, and strangers to modesty and Christian humility, commended their own personal abilities, and grossly flattered their emperors, who received, with pleasure, the most blasphemous titles. Ovid, at the conclusion of his *Metamorphoses*, boasts that he finished a work that shall last for ever; Horace vaunts that he accomplished one more lasting than brass; Cicero asserts, with the most undisguised vanity, that it was happy for Rome he had been consul: and instances of the self-sufficiency of Stoics, and other sects, are too numerous to be recited. The sacred writers, on the contrary, modestly publish to the world their own infirmities, and those of their party; and Christian authors speak humbly of themselves, while Pagan writers were arrogant

(*b*) Cave, Part II. Ch. v.

and

and vain-glorious to a shameful degree. So efficacious was christianity in repressing vanity, and humbling its professors, that several of them rejected the crown of martyrdom, and would not suffer men to call them martyrs. Dioclesian admitted none to greater familiarity than kissing his toe: Domitian published his edicts with this preamble, "Our Lord and God so commands it;" and required these titles when men wrote or spoke of him. Caligula built a temple to himself, erected a golden statue, and instituted sacrifices and priests to officiate in the service (*k*): and other emperors claimed and obtained the honours paid to the gods. Virgil divides the empire between Jupiter and Augustus; and Lucian declares, that all the outrages committed in the civil wars were advantageous, considered as preparatory to Nero's accession to the throne. The emperors, in their rescripts, were not ashamed to confer divine attributes upon themselves: Augustus was worshipped as a god in the provinces, and temples were erected in honour of him (*l*). If we compare the conduct of these Pagans with that of some Christians, the contrast is so striking as to appear at first view. Dr. Cave (*m*) points out several instances of Christian humility in an empress, and in other personages at the court of Rome, where blasphemous titles were formerly

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(*k*) Hackwell's Apology, Book IV. Ch. x. Sect. 1.

(*l*) Ibid. Sect. 2.

(*m*) Part II. Ch. vii.

SECT. III. conferred, which at present would shock the vainest monarch in christendom. We cannot entertain a doubt but inferiors, in all parts of the empire, exhibited humility and condescension, unknown to them before, in imitation of their superiors, and in compliance with the precept and example of their Lord and master.

and improved on the old Roman laws.

A person sufficiently acquainted with the Roman laws, before and after the establishment of christianity, might, doubtless, perceive, that they were considerably improved by the precepts of the gospel. We may well suppose, that the spirit of that system, which had such powerful influence on the hearts and manners of its professors, must have had some effect on the Christian emperors, and on the laws which they enacted. It is impossible but a change in the spirit of lawgivers should be perceptible in their edicts. They who prescribed creeds, and entered deeply into theological matters, could not have omitted blending Christian morality with their civil institutes, and transcribing into the civil code, the humanity and benevolence inspired by the gospel. A learned Civilian acquaints us, that the emperor Justinian, finding the Digest defective, supplied its defects by employing the first book of his code in treating on religion. This emperor, besides the care and superintendence of charitable institutions, empowered bishops to interpose their authority where the civil magistrate was absent, or voluntarily

tarly delayed judgment; and to perform the S E C T. III. double part of civil judges and overseers of their flocks (n). The former of these powers was the foundation of ecclesiastical courts; afterwards so useful as I have already observed. Hence it appears, that christianity was productive of salutary effects in the execution of justice; in relieving distress of every kind; in mitigating the cruelty of Heathens, and disposing their hearts to pity and beneficence. The Justinian law, besides these advantages, restrained libertinism, by enacting that bawds, once warned to relinquish their wicked profession, and persisting in it, shall be put to death; that any person who lets an house to a bawd; knowing the infamy of his character, shall be fined in a large sum to the prince, and his house exposed to the danger of confiscation (o).

Nothing can more strongly evince the moral virtues of the first Christians than the apologies which have been published by some of that order against the accusations of gainfayers. Had not christianity and its professors been attacked at a time that its evidence, and the actions of these men might have been scrutinized, there might appear a suspicion of fraud in the contrivance of the Christian system; and many virtues of primitive Christians would, perhaps, have been unno-

Calumnies against Christians, and the gospel serviceable to both.

(n) Sir Th. Ridley's View of Civil and Eccl. Law, Part I. Ch. ii. Sect. 2. (o) Ibid, Ch. iii, Sect. 4. Collation 3d.

T

ticed,

SECT. III. tised, were it not for the crimes imputed to them by their adversaries. The enemies of the gospel first attempted to stop its progress by open assaults; but finding such attempts fruitless, they endeavoured to hinder its reception, by reviling its professors, and loading them with calumnies. For this reason the first converts to christianity admitted none to their communion, except such as would not disgrace their profession; and required proselytes to give security that they would strictly observe the tenets of their religion. This precaution had a tendency to exclude unworthy members from the church, and was the foundation of sponsorship at baptism, as Mosheim assures us (*p*). Yet Christians were branded with the opprobrious name of Atheists for their aversion to the Pagan gods; and some declaimed against them as magicians, on account of the miracles wrought by Christ and his followers. They were accused of worshipping the sun and the head of an ass, of endeavouring to subvert the Roman government, of killing and eating children in celebrating their mysteries, and of most shocking incests in their feasts of charity (*q*). These and other calumnies propagated by their enemies, and especially the Jews, operated so powerfully on the minds of Pagans, that they were condemned unheard, and exposed to several persecutions

(*p*) Eccl. Hist.(*q*) Broughton Art. Christians.

during

during the first three centuries, though other SECT. III. causes contributed to them besides the malice of enemies: but the lives of Christians were sufficient to refute those accusations, and furnished apologists with opportunities of displaying their learning in defence of innocence, and of exhibiting virtues which might perhaps have lain in obscurity, had it not been for the malignity of virulent opponents.

“ There is an infamous report, says an Athenian philosopher (r) and profelyte to the gospel, that we are guilty of Thyestean feasts, or feeding on murdered infants, of incestuous copulations, and impiety towards the gods.” In answer to such accusations, Christians appealed to their actions, and consented to undergo the severest penalties, if convicted of the crimes they were accused of by their enemies. “ If any man, says this apologist, convicts us of a greater or lesser crime, we seek not to escape punishment; nay, we willingly suffer the cruelest that you can inflict upon us.”—“ If these be true, spare no age, no sex; punish us with our wives and children; extirpate us out of the world; but if these are forged and scandalous calumnies of wicked men, from malice, mark them as such; enquire into our lives, opinions, obedience to authority, and our concern for your person and government; allow us but the common

Christians  
falsely ac-  
cused of in-  
cest and de-  
vouring in-  
fants.

(r) Athenagoras Legatio pro Christianis.

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justice you grant your enemies; we ask no more, and are assured of victory." He thus proceeds in his defence against such aspersions; "How can we be suspected of breach of chastity, who think that to look with concupiscence is to commit adultery, and believe we shall be judged for our very thoughts? How can we, who think it our duty to exclude all impure thoughts, be supposed guilty of actions which we dare not think of? We marry for procreation, and that but once; many remain all their lives single; and some have carried the idea of chastity so far as to emasculate themselves. Do they, who keep a fair for sodomy, and all manner of lewdness, accuse us of the crimes which they are themselves guilty of, and which they ascribe to their gods as laudable actions? Adulterers and sodomites accuse us who marry but once, or make eunuchs of ourselves for the kingdom of heaven's sake, that we may have a nearer union with God. None of our servants, from whom it is impossible to conceal our actions, have seen us eat human flesh, or even falsely accused us of any such crime. How could we, who charge women with murder that cause abortion, be supposed to kill children born into the world? Or we, who think it criminal to expose our children, be capable of murdering them? How could we, who abstain from all fights of the combats of gladiators with each other, and with beasts, as contrary to our feelings, embroil our hands in the blood

blood of innocents (s)?" The learned Watſon (t) SECT. III. thinks it probable, that the clandestine manner in which Christians were obliged to celebrate the Eucharist, for fear of Jews and Pagans, and the words eating the body, and drinking the blood of Christ, made use of in that solemnity, together with the custom of imparting a kiss of charity to each other, and calling each other brothers and sisters, gave occasion to the malicious tale of their feasting on murdered infants, and of incestuous intercourses at the meetings of Christians.

Dion Cassius acquaints us, that the emperor Domitian put to death multitudes of Christians, and confiscated their estates, on pretence of Atheism, and because they embraced the religion of the Jews, who were often confounded with Christians, because Christ and his apostles were born in Judea. It must be admitted, that, according to the ideas of Heathens, Christians were Atheists; since they worshipped but one God, and not a single deity of the thirty thousand, adored by Pagans, as a learned apologist judiciously observes. Christians were also accused of being authors of public calamities; an accusation, to which the world is indebted for learned treatises, written for the purpose of wiping off that aspersions. "If, says Tertullian (u), the city is besieged, if any thing happen in the fields, in the garrisons, in the

Of being  
Atheists and  
authors of  
public calamities.

(s) Athenagoras Legatio pro Christianis.  
to Gibbon.

(u) Apolog. Cap. xl.

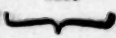
(t) Answer

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islands, they presently cry out, it is because of the Christians. Our enemies conspire the ruin of good men, and cloak their hatred with this vain pretence, that Christians are the causes of all public calamities. If the Tyber overflows its banks, and the Nile does not overflow the fields; if there be an earthquake, famine, or plague, they instantly cry out, Away with the Christians to the lions." We may reasonably suppose other accusations against Christians to be as groundless as this, and as destitute of foundation. Augustine wrote his famous work, *De Civitate Dei*, for a refutation of this charge; Arnobius (w) enumerates the disasters experienced by mankind before the appearance of Christ; and Orosius wrote his history to prove, that, in all ages preceding the introduction of christianity, men had felt calamities similar to those falsely ascribed to the religion of the gospel. Cyprian (x) maintains, that their cruelty to Christians was one of the sins which provoked God to inflict severe judgments upon them; that "they were punished less than they deserved, who were proud, covetous, cruel in anger, extravagant in game, drunk with wine, full of envy, debauched with lust, or mad with cruelty. Why, says he, do you wonder, that the flames of divine anger rise higher, when the sins of men call daily

(w) *Adversus Gentes*, Lib. I. Edit. Paris, 1605, p. 5, & seq.

(x) *Adversus Demetrianum*, Edit. Paris, 1726, p. 219.

for it." I might cite many other instances, SECT. III.  
in which apologists displayed great learning in   
refuting this futile charge; and I have dwelt on  
it for the purpose of proving how little credit is  
due to the other accusations of men so bigotted  
and absurd.

Christians were not disturbers of the peace, and Of turbulence.  
enemies of the civil government, but honoured  
magistrates, revered their power, paid tribute,  
obeyed the laws, where they were not evidently  
contrary to the laws of Christ; and, where they  
refused to observe them, submitted quietly to the  
severest penalties. When a tax was demanded of  
Christ, he refused not to pay it; when arraigned  
before Pilate, he acknowledged his authority, and  
submitted to his sentence. The apostles, though  
unjustly accused before the council, went away  
rejoicing, and we may well suppose, that the same  
spirit of piety and submission was displayed in suc-  
ceeding ages by the genuine followers of Christ,  
who imitated these and other virtues even to a  
fault. I admit that they refused to swear by the  
emperor's genius, which, according to Tertullian,  
was to pay divine honours to devils; or to cele-  
brate their festivals, which were scenes of vanity,  
luxury, debauchery and other vices (y): so far  
they were disobedient, and were punished for their  
disobedience, by cruel persecutions, horrid to re-

(y) Cave, Part III. Cap. iv.

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late! The Greeks and Romans had laws against meetings, and desired to have them executed against Christians, who were accused of seditiously holding unlawful assemblies. Their defence clearly proves them innocent of the charge; they desired to distinguish between their own meetings, and those against which the law was directed, and maintained, that the prohibition did not relate to them, and that the law was not applicable to such meetings as theirs (z). Here we are enabled to overturn that false and dangerous assertion of Cardinal Bellarmin, that it is lawful to depose and murder heretical princes; and that primitive Christians only wanted means to attempt it on Nero, Dioclesian and Julian, who cruelly persecuted them. The Cardinal did not consider, that resolute men, who showed a contempt of life in other instances, might easily have assassinated them, if their consciences permitted them. If it was agreeable to the spirit of the gospel to put heretical princes to death, St. Paul would not have advised the Romans to obey Nero, but to murder and depose him. It is dangerous to teach, that any man may lawfully rebel against his sovereign, where he thinks his own religion preferable to that of the prince: and since it was not attempted by zealous Christians on the vilest tyrants, as well as on the most cruel persecutors, we may be assured,

(z) Cave, Part III. Cap. iv.

that such conduct is perfectly repugnant to the SECRET.  
genius of the gospel (*a*). III.

In order to asperse Christianity, the Heathen Of being  
in Minucius Fælix represents its professors as poor poor and  
and ignorant, mute in public; and talkative in ignorant,  
private, to women, children and mechanics. Cel-  
sus (*b*) alleges, that the learned were excluded  
from the mysteries of Christianity, and none ad-  
mitted but fools, slaves, women and children, all  
which accusations are denied by Apologists. Oc-  
tavius (*c*) affirms, that where they declined to  
preach in open day, it was from a dread of per-  
secutions, which frequently threatened them.  
“Christians, says Origen (*d*), do not readily ad-  
mit men to hear them, until they have pre-ex-  
amined their dispositions, and found them resolv-  
ed to lead a pious life. It is false that we address  
our discourses to women and children only, and  
that in corners; since we openly promise eternal  
happiness to those who observe the laws of the  
gospel, and explain the sublime mysteries of reli-  
gion to the wise and learned; while we adapt our  
discourses to the capacities of the weak, who stand  
more in need of milk, than strong meats.” Doc-  
tor Watson (*e*) denies that “they preached in  
single houses, or obscure villages, or impure bro-  
thels, but in the synagogues and temples, in the

(*a*) Cave, Part III. Cap. iv.

(*b*) Origen contra

Celsum. Lib. III.

(*c*) Minucius Fælix, Sect. 31.

(*d*) Lib. III.

(*e*) Lett. IV. to Gibbon.

SECT. III. streets and market places of the great cities of the Roman provinces, in Jerusalem, Corinth, in Antioch, in Athens, in Ephesus and in Rome." The erudition of apologists may convince us that Christianity was embraced by men of learning and abilities. Arnobius (*f*) observes, that orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, men of great genius, love our religion, despising those things wherein they before trusted. We should not be surprised, if men of low birth, and humble fortunes, accustomed to self-denial, should more readily embrace the gospel, than the opulent, whose passions were inflamed by sinful indulgence. Besides, the truth of a religious system does not depend on the estates of its professors: and if it depended on such circumstances, we are furnished with an argument in its defence, supported as it was by persons of distinguished rank, and in course of time, by princes and potentates. In Domitian's time, Flavius Clemens, that Emperor's nephew, and Acilius Glabrio, who had been consuls, embraced the gospel; and many of the greatest birth and fortune became converts in the reign of Commodus; among whom was Apollonius a senator, a philosopher, and man of refinement, who pleaded his cause before the Roman senate (*g*). Tertullian remonstrates with the Roman governors, and maintains, that by persecut-

(*f*) *Adversus Gentes*, Lib. I.      (*g*) *Cave*, Part I. Cap. iii.

ing Christians, they will depopulate their respec-<sup>S E C T.</sup>  
tive countries, and banish the best citizens in all <sup>III.</sup>  
places and departments in the state; in cities,  
islands, castles, corporations, councils, armies, pa-  
lace, senate and courts of judicature. This au-  
thor entreats Scapula, deputy governor of Africa,  
to consider, how many thousand men and women  
of every rank and condition, would readily offer  
themselves, if he persisted in persecuting them.  
He asks, "What fires and swords must he have to  
dispatch them? Carthage itself must be decimated,  
his own friends and persons of his acquaintance,  
the principal men and matrons of the city will  
suffer; if you spare not us, spare yourself, spare  
Carthage, have pity on the province (*h*)."

The enemies of Christians, among other charges, <sup>and useless</sup>  
accused them of being useless members of society, <sup>members of</sup>  
instead of being serviceable to communities. To <sup>society.</sup>  
this charge Tertullian (*i*) replied with his usual  
eloquence, and strength of reasoning: "How can  
this be, when we have the same diet, habit and  
manner of life? We are no Brachmans, nor In-  
dian Gymnosophists, who live in woods secluded  
from the world; we are sensible of our obligations  
to our Creator, and despise none of the good  
things which he bestows, though careful to use  
them with temperance and sobriety. We make  
use of your markets, shambles, baths, taverns,

(*b*) Tertullian ad Scapulam, Cap. v. (*i*) Apolog. Cap. xlii.

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shops, fairs, and other places of social intercourse, We go to sea, cultivate and improve the ground, employ ourselves in merchandise, exercise mechanic arts, and sell our manufactures like other men: how then are we unserviceable to your affairs with whom we live? None have reasonable cause to complain that we are unprofitable, except bawds, panders, bullies, ruffians, sellers of poison, magicians, soothsayers, wizards and astrologers, the lucre of which men must be hurtful to the state." Other apologists maintained, that Christians were of advantage to commonwealths, by restraining vices, which were detrimental to society, by precept and example. "Enquire, says Origen (*k*), into the lives of some of us; compare our former and present mode of life; and you will perceive in what impurities and impieties men were involved, before they embraced our doctrines. But since they embraced them, how just, grave, moderate, and constant, are they become? Yea, some are so inflamed with the love of purity and goodness, as to abstain even from lawful enjoyments: the church abounds with such men, wherever the doctrines of Christianity have prevailed. How is it possible they can be pestilent members of society, who have converted many from the sink of vice, to the study of virtue and a life of temperance, conformable to the dic-

(*k*) *Contra Celsum*, Lib. I.

tates of right reason?—We reclaim women from  
 immodesty, quarrelling, or parting from their hus-  
 bands; men, from the wild extravagance of the  
 sports and theatres, and restrain youth, who are  
 prone to vice and luxury, by not only painting  
 the vileness of lust, but the punishment reserved  
 for the vicious and dissolute.”

From the testimonies of Tertullian and Justin  
 Martyr it appears, that mankind were improved  
 in their manners by the gospel, notwithstanding  
 the prejudices entertained against it by Jews and  
 Gentiles. “The husband, says the former of  
 these writers, now cured of his former jealousy,  
 by his wife’s conversion, turns her and her new  
 modesty out of doors together. The father, so  
 tender of his undutiful son whilst an Heathen, dis-  
 inherits him, when he becomes a Christian and  
 obedient to his will. The master, hitherto so kind  
 to a faithless slave, disbands him now, upon his  
 religion and fidelity. So much is the name of  
 Christian hated, notwithstanding the advantages  
 of the Gospel, that a husband prefers a false wife;  
 the father a rebellious son; the master a knavish  
 servant, to having them good and virtuous Chris-  
 tians (1).” The following passage proves, that a  
 considerable alteration has been wrought in the  
 manners of those, who embraced the gospel, es-  
 pecially of Jews and Gentiles in their behaviour

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Tertullian  
 and Justin  
 Martyr  
 prove man-  
 kind re-  
 formed by  
 the gospel.

(1) Tertull. Apolog. Cap. iii.

towards

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towards each other. Justin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philosopher, speaks of this happy change in the following words. "We, who formerly delighted in adultery, now observe the strictest chastity; we, who used the charms of magic, have devoted ourselves to the true God; we, who valued money and gain above all things, do now cast what we have in common, and distribute to every man according to his necessities; we, who hated each other and refused to associate with those of a different tribe, now familiarly converse together, since Christ's coming, and pray for the conversion of those who unjustly hate us (*m*)."

The Jews were extremely illiberal, reproached the Gentiles as the vilest of mankind, and loaded them with the scurrilous epithets of dogs and outcasts; while Heathens hated and despised the Jews, who declined social intercourse with other nations. In consequence of the mutual hatred which subsisted between them, Pagans oppressed them every where, and at last the Romans came and took away both their place and nation. Christ, by his gentle doctrines, and by the manners of his followers, broke down the partition which separated Heathens and Hebrews; lessened their prejudices, and rendered them more liberal, in their conduct to each other (*n*).

(*m*) Justin Martyr, Apol. II.

(*n*) Cave, Part III. Cap. iii.

Other apologists appealed to the lives of Christians for a refutation of calumnies, and a proof of improvement in morals. "Among us, says Athenagoras (e), the meanest labourers and old women, though unable to discourse, and dispute for the usefulness of their profession, yet demonstrate it by their lives and good works. They do not indeed critically weigh their words, and recite elegant orations; but manifest honest and virtuous actions. Being buffeted, they strike not again, nor sue those at law, who spoil and plunder them; they give liberally to those who ask, and love their neighbours as themselves." Clement the Roman commends the many virtues of Corinthians in his epistle to that people; "who, saith he, did ever live among you, that did not admire your sober and moderate piety, and declare the greatness of your hospitality? You do all things without respect of persons, walking in God's statutes, subject to those who rule you, giving due honour to your elders. You command men to live honestly and soberly; women, to live chastly and holily, loving their husbands, and managing their household affairs with all sobriety. You are humble, not proud; content with the daily bread which God supplies; hearing diligently his word, and enlarged in charity." From the following passage it appears, that Christians excelled the

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The same  
proved by  
other au-  
thors.

(e) Legatio pro Christianis.

SECT. most refined Pagans in moral virtues; "if we  
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should be compared with you, says Minucius Fælix to the Heathen, though our discipline should seem, in some degree, inferior, yet shall we ourselves be found far superior to you. You prohibit adultery and practise it; we continue faithful to our wives; you punish wickedness when committed; we think it sinful to indulge a wicked thought.—It is with your party that prisons are crowded, but not a single Christian is there, except it be a confessor or apostate."—He tells his adversary how much Christians surpassed the best philosophers, who were notoriously wicked, adulterers, tyrannical and eloquent, to declaim against the vices, of which they were most guilty." Lactantius (p) boldly affirms, that Christians were free from several detestable crimes, common among Heathens: "They are not Christians, says this writer, but Gentiles who rob by land and turn pirates by sea; who prepare poisons and dispatch their wives for their dowries, or their husbands, that they might marry their adulterers: who strangle or expose their infants, commit incest with their daughters, sisters, mothers or vestals; who prostitute their bodies to unnatural lusts, seek heaven by witchcraft, and commit several other crimes odious to relate."

(p) Lib. V. Cap. ix.

Having

Having produced the testimonies of Christians S E E T. III. to prove the virtues of that people, and the calumnies against them; it may be thought necessary Julian and Pliny admit the virtues of Christians. to adduce some drawn from Heathens, and enemies of the gospel. For this purpose, I have selected two, that are more remarkable than the rest; the first is, a letter of the emperor Julian to Arfacius, in which he requires that pontiff to recommend the virtues of Christians to the imitation of Heathens: the second is an epistle of Pliny (q) the younger, proconsul in Bithynia under Trajan, to that emperor in Rome. "The governor of that province asks his master, whether Christians are to be punished for the name, though innocent in other respects: tells him, that he repeatedly asked persons brought before him, whether they were Christians, and persevered in the profession of the gospel; that he threatened to correct those who persisted, and enforced those threats; as they deserved to be chastised, at least for their obstinacy. Some, says he, were accused of being Christians, who, as a proof of their innocence, offered incense to the Gods, uttered imprecations against Christ, and made libations to your image, which I commanded to be brought out with the images of the Gods. Others who were charged by an informer, with professing Christianity, acknowledged they had formerly

(q) Lib. X. Epist. 97. ad Trajanum.

SECT. III. been Christians, but had renounced their error:  these also worshipped your image and the images of the Gods, and vented imprecations against Christ. These latter affirmed, that the great crime of Christians consisted in assembling on a certain day, before light, to sing hymns to Christ; binding themselves by an oath, to be guilty of no crime, not to steal, rob, commit adultery, or break faith. After this they usually departed, and met again to take an innocent repast and eat promiscuously: I tried to find the truth by torture of two women, who were present at their worship; but found nothing, except an obstinate kind of superstition, carried to excess." Tertullian complains, that the mere name of Christian was a crime, and that Christians were not fairly tried like other malefactors: "Christians only, saith he, are denied this privilege; no such favour is shewn unto us; we are condemned unheard; to be a Christian is thought a sufficient proof of murder, sacrilege, incest or sedition, without enquiring into the fact, time, place, and persons of the delinquents (r)." Serennius Gracchus, proconsul of Asia, represented to Adrian the injustice of putting Christians to death when no crime was proved against them (s). Antoninus Pius, Adrian's successor, acquainted the commons of Asia, that they slandered Christians, and accused them of crimes

(r) Tertullian Apolog. Cap. i.

(s) Eusebii Hist. Eccl. Lib. IV. Cap. ix.

which they could not prove (t). This Pagan emperor exculpates them from being the cause of earthquakes which happened in that country; and reminds the states of Asia, that "they themselves were always discouraged and sunk under such disasters; whereas Christians never discovered more cheerfulness and confidence in God, than on such occasions."—That "they pay no regard to religion, and neglect the worship of the eternal: and, because Christians honour and adore him, are jealous of them, and persecute them even unto death."—"Many persons have consulted me relative to Christians, and I have returned the same answer to them all; namely, that if any one accuse a Christian, merely on account of his religion, the accused person shall be acquitted, and the accuser himself punished (u)." Could the adversaries of Christianity have proved the crimes, imputed to its professors, they would not have condemned them unheard, nor fabricated lies, to inflame both princes and populace against them. Could they have been convicted of any crime in the reign of Nero, that tyrant would not have set fire to the city of Rome, nor charged it to Christians, that he might have a pretext for persecuting them. All accusations were in time completely silenced, by the lives of Christians, which were exemplary, and austere even to an extreme.

(t) Justin Martyr, Apol. II. and Euseb. *ibid.* Lib. IV, Cap. xiii.

(u) Broughton, Art. Christians.

**S E C T. III.** Eusebius (*w*) assures us, that the Christian religion had, by the gravity, modesty, and virtues of its professors, silenced every cavil; so that no person dare asperse the gospel, or charge it with any of the calumnies formerly fastened on it by its enemies.

An assertion  
of Mr.  
Gibbon ex-  
amined.

Had the historian of the Roman empire reasoned fairly, or duly considered the effects of the Christian code on the morals of individuals, and the welfare of communities; he could not have asserted, that monastic institutions have produced evils, which counterbalanced the advantages of the gospel; nor have ascribed these evils to the Christian system. Celibacy and monastic institutions owed their rise to excesses of religion and virtue in the primitive Christians, who were extremely austere: but it would be as absurd to impute these excesses to the gospel, as to ascribe the errors of men, and the abuses of reason, to the rational faculty duly cultivated and improved. Had Mr. Gibbon considered that the gospel tends to prevent or remove the bad effects of Pagan and Mahometan religions; and that it actually abolished paganism and several of its bad effects, in many countries, where it was established; he could not have compared the benefits of Christianity, with the disadvantages which have arisen from abuses of it. The Christian institution not only encou-

(*w*) Eccl. Hist.

rages

rages morality, but has removed the mischiefs of false systems of religion; and not only produced certain benefits to individuals and communities, but tends to prevent the bad effects generally resulting from sects, which are false and erroneous. True religion not only has removed political inconveniences in countries, where it was formerly introduced; but is well calculated to prevent in Christian countries, the evils arising from excesses of religion, or corruptions of it by its professors. These evils shall be pointed out in the subsequent parts of this work, that men may not impute to the gospel disadvantages, arising from irreligion, superstition and enthusiasm; and that rulers might see the necessity of properly supporting a rational establishment, capable of doing much good, and preventing much mischief in their respective governments.

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Dr. Priestley, in his lecture on the influence of religion on civil society, treats the subject with little candour, and still less information. Amidst the numerous bad effects of paganism, he mentions none except cruelty, austeri-ty, and human sacrifices, and treats of these but slightly and superficially; and while he hints at some trivial advantages of heathenism, he passes over those which were most striking and essential. In speaking of the superstitions of the Jews, he affirms, that in the beginning of their wars under the Maccabees, their strictness in keeping the sabbath was nearly

Animadver-  
sions on Dr.  
Priestley's  
56th Lec-  
ture.

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fatal to them; but is totally silent with respect to the various benefits which have arisen from judaism. According to this author, mahometanism has rendered the Saracens brave and obedient, he should have said servile, to princes; while he passes over in silence its other effects. He affirms, that religion has been detrimental to society, "comprehending, under that term, enthusiasm, superstition, and every species of false religion as well as true;" and thus raises a prejudice against true religion, which tends to remove or prevent the inconveniences of false. He dwells more on the few advantages arising from excesses or corruptions of the gospel, than on its genuine effects, which were more numerous and permanent. To excesses he attributes the liberty of Britain; to the extensive power of the popes, the easy intercourse of different nations, and the union of them when the Roman empire was disjointed; to the pomp of popish worship the preservation of the fine arts during barbarous ages; and to popery itself the check on despotism in Spain, Portugal, and other places. Thus he expatiates on the advantages which have arisen from those excesses or abuses, while he mentions but a single advantage of it, namely, the abolition of servitude in the western world; and overbalances this advantage, by the excesses of German Anabaptists and English Levellers, and by the cruel persecutions

secutions of the bloody Mary and Philips of Spain, <sup>SECT.</sup>  
"Those evils," says this writer, "and particu- <sup>III.</sup>  
larly these arising from persecution, ought certainly to be taken into the account, when we make an estimate of the benefits accruing to the world from Christianity." Had this author wished his readers to make a fair estimate of the benefits of Christianity, he would have enumerated many happy effects accruing from it, in different parts of the globe; and would not unjustly have imputed to it the evils of persecution. He himself admits, that persecutions subsisted in the world, before the promulgation of the gospel; and it would be easy to prove, that the persecutions which prevailed since that period, have arisen from a diametrical opposition to its spirit and letter. Let me ask then, why the evils of persecution should be taken into account, in estimating the benefits which have accrued from Christianity? The 9th and 10th sections of this work will evince, that the cruelties of persecutors, and the excesses of fanatics, have originated from avarice, ambition, or mistaken policy; or from ignorance, corruption, or perversion of the gospel; and that those persecutions and excesses, far from originating from Christianity, prove the excellence of that institution, by an observance of whose laws all the evils of fanaticism and persecution must vanish and disappear. The author might insist

**S E C T.** more largely on the happy effects of the Christian  
**III.** code; but as his answer to gainfayers will supply  
ideas which have been omitted in this section,  
he now passes them over in silence, lest he should  
tire his readers by needless repetitions, in a sub-  
sequent part of this treatise.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

ON THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND EFFECTS OF  
MAHOMETANISM.

*Enquiry into the origin of Mahometanism, useful and curious.—State of religion in Arabia, and the disputes of Christian churches favoured Mahomet's designs.—Imbecility of neighbouring nations, and the political state of Arabia contributed to his success.—Means employed in propagating his religion.—The same subject continued.—Parts of the Koran designed to extricate him from some difficulty or gratify some passion.—Character of Mahomet.—He abolished some superstitious and barbarous practices of Pagan Arabs.—Many of his doctrines borrowed, and inferior to those in the originals.—His unborrowed opinions false, contradictory and ridiculous.—His paradise and hell.—Paradise and other doctrines contributed to his successes.—Death of Mahomet, and establishment of the Caliphate.—Mahometanism assisted Calid in reducing Persia and other places.—It assisted him in reducing Damascus.—It assisted Obeidah in reducing Hems, Jerusalem, and other places.—All Syria, Egypt, and part of Persia, submit to the Saracens in the Caliphate of Omar.—Other places submitted to them in his Caliphate.—Other causes concurred with Mahometanism in promoting the conquests of the*  
Sara-

*Saracens.—Comparison of Christianity and Mahometanism in the tendency and effects of their doctrines.—Comparison of the lives and doctrines of Christ and Mahomet.—Difficulty of making apostates from Mahometanism.—Despotism an effect of the conquests of the Saracens.—The Koran secures private property to individuals.—Ignorance an effect of Mahometanism.—Revenge, illiberality, and extortion effects of it.—Effects of the doctrine of Predestination.—Effects of Mahometan devotions on individuals and communities.—Effects of Mahometanism prove the excellent tendency of Christianity.*

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Enquiry into  
the origin  
of Maho-  
metanism,  
useful and  
curious.

BY Mahometanism I mean that system of doctrines and rites enjoined by the Koran, and which distinguish it from the Hebrew and Christian revelations. As Mahomet was acquainted with the law and the gospel, many of his doctrines are derived from these sources; while he adopted others, which differ from them essentially, and had a considerable influence on the state of societies. Hence we may ascribe the chief advantages, produced by the Koran, to the Jewish and Christian institutions, and all the evils, which resulted from Mahometanism, to deviations from the gospel. The prophet of Arabia has been indebted for his useful tenets, chiefly to the Mosaic and evangelical writings; and for his absurdities and contradictions to the weakness of unassisted reason, and

to a compliance with the superstitions of his illiterate countrymen. It would not be difficult to point out the sources, from whence he derived, and the originals, from whence he transcribed most of the doctrines and rites which he enjoins. Such a disquisition would prove, beyond a doubt, that the Koran has not the smallest pretension to an original revelation, but is a medley of Jewish, Pagan, Christian, and Arian tenets, blended with the trifling, absurd, and contradictory notions of the prophet himself. Mahomet, in order to make as many proselytes as possible, held the unity of God, allowed by all sects, adopted tenets maintained by each of them, and indulged his followers with sensual gratifications. But to judge of the effects of Mahometanism, it will be necessary to consider its rise and progress, the doctrines which it inculcates, and the duties which it enjoins. Some of my readers may possibly desire to know the steps, by which a people, once so despicable, erected so formidable an empire; the means by which a private man was enabled to raise himself to be a prince and a pontiff, and the several causes which concurred to favour his designs. An enquiry into the doctrines and effects of the Mahometan code, is extremely useful to the cause of true religion, as it displays the superior excellence of the Christian institution, whether we judge of those two systems from the lives of their respective authors, the doctrines they

con-

SECT. <sup>IV</sup> contain, or the effects they produced on, the state of society. As truth never appears so amiable as when contrasted to error, men should be acquainted with false, as well as true opinions. The doctrines of the Koran should be exhibited to the rational Christian, to render him enamoured of the gospel; just as Spartans exposed drunken slaves to their youth, for the purpose of attaching them to sobriety, and creating an abhorrence for so beastly a vice. By reading the religious tenets of different countries, and by observing the erroneous opinions of men in all ages and nations, we learn to tolerate those who are in error, and become grateful to God for the superior excellence of the religion we profess. Nor is an enquiry into the effects of Mahometanism less curious than it is useful; since they make a considerable figure in the annals of oriental history, and exhibit scenes in which the welfare of nations and individuals was so much concerned. We shall see, in the course of this section, that the Mahometan religion was instrumental "in subduing whole nations, altering ancient governments, and introducing a new face of affairs into the world," as Ockley (a) expresses it.

State of religion in Arabia, favoured Mahomet's designs.

Several circumstances concurred to assist Mahomet in reforming his countrymen, and advancing his designs. The religious state of Arabia,

(a) History of the Saracens, Preface.

at that juncture, was such, as might have induced S E C T.  
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a good man to wish for a reformation, and encouraged a wise man to undertake it from a prospect of success. The Arabs at this time believed in one supreme being, creator, and lord of the universe; while they worshipped inferior deities and idols, whose intercession they implored as mediators with God. They had a multitude of those idols; and Mahomet, while he retained some superstitious rites of his countrymen, totally abolished this idolatrous worship. Some of the tribes embraced the religion of the Magi; others that of the Jews and Christians; some denied a resurrection, some asserted it, while others believed the doctrine of transmigration. To prove the ignorance and superstitions of others, it may suffice to observe, that they left camels to perish at the graves of the deceased, that their friends might not go on foot at the resurrection, which was considered as disgraceful (*b*). Arabia abounded with heresies, owing perhaps to the liberty and independency of the tribes. Some of them worshipped the Virgin Mary as God; and, at the Nicene council, some believed her divinity, and said there were two Gods, besides the Father, namely, Christ, and the Virgin Mary. Others imagined her exempted from humanity, and the completion of the Trinity, as if it was imperfect

(*b*) Sale's Preliminary Discourse, Sect. 1.

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without her: which absurd idea induced Mahomet to question the doctrine of the Trinity itself (c).

State of the  
eastern and  
western  
churches  
favoured  
Mahomet.

The state of the eastern and western churches, in Mahomet's time, also assisted him in accomplishing the reformation which he had concerted. The western was divided into sects, who hated and persecuted each other; and the eastern was become degenerate and corrupt, no longer endued with that union, and purity of doctrine, which distinguished the primitive Christians. The clergy were ambitious, and fond of controversy; and destroyed that peace and love enjoined by the gospel. After the Nicene council, the eastern church was rent by the disputes of Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians and Eutychians: and in the western church two candidates for the episcopal chair carried their contests so high at Rome, that several were murdered on the occasion. Those dissensions were fomented by the emperors, and particularly Constantius, who, instead of reconciling differences, confounded the pure religion of the gospel with intricate questions, and vulgar superstitions. When princes and ecclesiastics had arrived at such a degree of corruption in doctrine and morals, we might naturally expect that a general depravity of the people would be the necessary consequence. At this period Mahomet appeared in the world, perhaps as a scourge to chastise the eastern churches,

(c) Sale's preliminary Discourse, Sect. 1.

who

who were continually employed in religious diffen- S E C T. IV.  
sion, instead of practising the love and harmony  
required by the gospel. Men fond of controversy,  
and who disregarded the peace, enjoined by their  
religion, were indulged with a system that en-  
couraged war, were absolutely prohibited to dis-  
pute, and obliged to swallow the grossest absurdi-  
ties, without daring to murmur.

Not only the distracted state of religion was fa-  
vourable to Mahomet, but also the imbecility of  
the Romans and Persians, who would readily have  
crushed him, had they flourished as formerly (d).  
His successes against these powers, once so formi-  
dable, made many converts, and induced men to  
believe him assisted from heaven. His division of  
the spoil with new proselytes, and the pretended  
interposition of the angel Gabriel, and other  
celestial auxiliaries, contributed to advance his  
reputation and conquests; while the sublimity of  
the Koran, in some passages, persuaded his illite-  
rate countrymen, that he was inspired by the Al-  
mighty. After Constantine the Great, the Roman  
empire rapidly declined; as his successors were,  
in general, remarkable for cowardice, cruelty, and  
other bad qualities. At Mahomet's appearance in  
the sixth century, the western part of the empire  
was overrun by Goths, and the eastern so reduced  
by Huns on one side, and by Persians on the other,  
that it was incapable of stemming the violence of a

Imbecility  
of neigh-  
bouring na-  
tions and  
the political  
state of Ara-  
bia contri-  
buted to his  
success.

(d) Sale's preliminary Discourse, Sect. 1.

powerful

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powerful invasion. Though the emperor Heraclius was a prince of courage, and drove the Persians out of his dominions, yet the vitals of the empire had received a mortal wound when Mahomet appeared. The Greeks also were degenerate at this period, and the Persians on the decline, on account of the intestine dissensions which prevailed among this people. As those empires were weak and declining, so Arabia was in a strong and flourishing condition, when Mahomet began the work of reformation. Many fled thither, as to an asylum, from the persecutions, which raged in the Grecian empire; and the Arabs were inured to hardships, and lived in a frugal manner, strangers to the luxuries of the Greeks and Romans. The tribes were divided and independent on each other in religion and government; a circumstance very important, nay absolutely necessary to the propagation of his religion. Had all the tribes been united under one government, the impostor would soon have been obliged to yield to superior power, and been punished as a disturber of the public tranquillity. Had they all one established religion, universally received, he never could have thought it safe to attempt to subvert it. In Arabia several tribes and princes embraced the Jewish religion, when the Jews fled thither from the destruction of Jerusalem. Mahomet adopted many of their opinions and rites, in order to seduce them to his party, and encrease his followers; but finding them

them inflexibly averse from his doctrines, he repeatedly inveighs against them in his Koran, as his bitterest enemies, and employed various means to accomplish his designs.

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Many causes concurred to promote the plan devised by this impostor: when young he was employed in Syria, Egypt, and Palestine as a factor to a rich merchant, and had an opportunity of being acquainted with the religion and manners of different countries (*f*). After the death of this merchant, Mahomet conducted mercantile affairs for the widow, and acquitted himself so much to her satisfaction, that she put him in possession of her person and property. He then formed the project of reforming religion, and purging it from the corruptions introduced into it by Jews and Christians. For this purpose he retired to a cave, after the example of the Persian reformer (*g*); assumed great gravity in his deportment; was diligent in his devotions, and liberal in his charities, that he might acquire a character of sanctity and virtue. In order to prepare mens minds for his intended reformation, he employed a famous astrologer to report, that a mighty prophet should establish a new religion, and make great changes in the condition of mankind (*h*). Mahomet began with making converts in his own family, before

Means employed in propagating his religion.

(*f*) Guthrie's Geography, Art. Arabia.

(*g*) Bruckerus de Philosophia Persarum, Lib. II. Cap. iii. Sect. 2.

(*h*) Bayle's Observations.

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his attempts upon strangers: finding himself successful among these, he resolved to try what he could do by persuasion among persons of his acquaintance, and had the address to gain over some of the principal men at Mecca to his interest, in the course of three years. Being encouraged by his success, he no longer made his mission a secret, but proclaimed to every person, that he was commissioned by God to admonish his near relations (i), and fixed a day for the purpose; when many, who were invited to hear his admonitions, became profelytes to his opinions (k). He accommodated his discourses to the sentiments of his hearers: told the Arians, that as the endeavours of other prophets proved ineffectual, God sent him with a more ample commission than Moses or Christ, to establish an earthly kingdom for the propagation of religion, and the extirpation of those who refused to be converted (l). He did not deny that Moses and Christ were prophets, but maintained, that, as the Mosaic and Christian writings were corrupted by Jews and Christians, he came to purge them from errors. He did not object to the truth or divinity of the Jewish and Christian revelations; but maintained that they were defective, while he pretended his own to be the final and complete declaration of God's will to mankind; so that men were not to expect any

(i) Koran, Chap. lxxiv.

(k) Guthrie,

(l) Ibid.

other revelation. His opponents desired to see S E C T.  
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some miracle, similar to those wrought by Moses and Christ, as a proof of his divine commission. He refused to comply with this requisition, alledging, as an excuse, the suggestion of the angel Gabriel, that if he should work miracles, and his followers did not believe, they must be utterly destroyed (*m*). Sometimes he told them, that Mahomet was a prophet, sent to preach the rewards of paradise, and the pains of hell; that their ancestors despised the miracles of other prophets, and he would work none: at other times he said that they, who were ordained to believe, should do so without miracles, according to the doctrine of predestination (*n*). The Arabian impostor, in order to encrease his followers, proclaimed liberty to all; so that multitudes of slaves and fugitives crowded to his standard. He sometimes enjoins forgiveness, that he may not offend Christians; but so frequently inculcates revenge, by precept and example, that it becomes the prevailing doctrine of the Koran. He promised salvation and a sensual paradise to those of his own sect, however vicious and dissolute; and denounced damnation against infidels, without regard to their actions. According to the prophet, infidels alone shall be eternally damned, while Moslems, though guilty of the most heinous offences, shall be delivered,

(*m*) Broughton, Art. Aiat.

(*n*) Koran, Chap. xvii.

S E C T. when they shall have expiated them by their sufferings. No unbeliever or idolater shall ever be released, nor any believer damned to eternity. Moslems shall be punished in hell according to their crimes, but shall be delivered when purged of their sins by Abraham, or some other prophet (o).

The same  
subject con-  
tinued.

His refusal to work miracles having created dissatisfaction in the minds of some of his adherents, a powerful party was formed against him at Mecca; where the magistrates, dreading the troubles which usually attend on innovations in religion, declared themselves his enemies. He preached in public, and was heard with pleasure and patience, until he upbraided them and their fathers with idolatry and corruption: then, indeed, the Koreshites joined the magistrates in banishing him from the city. He retired to Medina with few friends, but was soon joined by a multitude of devotees, to whom he proposed the scheme of establishing his religion by force of arms. In his first expedition he could not boast of success; but in the second, he defeated a caravan of one thousand Koreshites, with three hundred and nineteen men; obtained considerable booty for himself and his adherents, and lost but fourteen men, whose names he enrolled in his catalogue of martyrs. We see that this persecution advanced rather than obstructed the propagation of his religion; had he not been forced

(o) Koran, Chap. ii.

to

to take up arms in his own defence, he might, <sup>SECT.</sup>  
perhaps for ever, have continued a private person <sup>IV.</sup> }  
in the capacity of a preacher. But having got at  
the head of a small army, ambition then probably  
prompted him to form schemes, before unthought  
of. Before his flight to Medina, the success of  
his religion was owing to persuasion and not to  
compulsion; at first he declared himself only a  
prophet, sent by God to admonish men, but with-  
out any authority to compel them to embrace his  
religion; and even pretended to bear with pa-  
tience injuries, which were offered him, while he  
was unable resist (*p*). Having increased the num-  
ber of his followers, he told them that God al-  
lowed them to defend themselves against enemies;  
and as he gathered strength he pretended to a di-  
vine permission even of attacking, for the purpose  
of abolishing idolatry, and corruptions of religion.  
When he came to Medina, supported by an army,  
he told those, who desired to see his miracles, that  
God sent Moses and Christ to reform mankind by  
persuasion and miracles: that, when those me-  
thods proved ineffectual, he was commissioned by  
God to compel men by the sword to do his will (*q*).  
At first he preached, and exhorted men to em-  
brace his doctrines; but as soon as his party was  
increased, we find the preacher transformed into  
a warrior, and offering death or conversion as the

*(p)* Sale, Sect. 2.*(q)* Koran, Chap. ii. iii. iv.

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only alternative to the vanquished. He told his disciples that the Koran was an abstract of the great book, in which the divine decrees were registered: that the angel Gabriel transcribed from thence faithfully, verse by verse, and chapter by chapter, and delivered them to him, as it was necessary to promulge them. He did not publish his Koran together; for then numerous objections might have been raised against it, which it would be impossible for him to answer. By bringing down the Koran by chapters, he was prepared to refute objections made to preceding chapters, to extricate himself from embarrassments, to quiet discontents among his followers, and to indulge or justify some criminal passions (r).

Parts of the Koran designed to extricate him from some difficulty or gratify some passions.

Great part of the Koran was invented occasionally, to solve some difficulty, or gratify his ruling passions of lust or ambition. Being defeated at Ohud, the prophet was ashamed, and said, that God suffered it on account of the transgressions of some of his followers, and to distinguish true from false believers. To silence the clamours of those, who lost their friends in the engagement, he invented the doctrine of fate, and maintained, that all events have been irrevocably fixed from eternity; that God had accurately predetermined the good or bad fortune of every person; his faith or infidelity, his obedience or disobedience:

(r) Bayle's Life of Mahomet.

that

that life cannot be protracted by any human means, S E C T.  
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beyond the destined period; that a man must die somewhere at the appointed time; and that it is more desirable to die martyrs in the cause of God, than at home in their beds. We shall presently see that, in consequence of this maxim, Mahometants rushed dauntless into the jaws of danger and of death, and “esteemed their bodies as dirt and rubbish to fill up the enemies trenches, for their brethren to pass over,” as Sir Paul Ricaut (s) strongly expresses it. Nor is it extraordinary, that this doctrine produced this effect; since nothing renders men so regardless of life, or induces them to fight so desperately, as a persuasion, that no caution could avert any evil which threatened them, or protract life a moment beyond the destined period (t). He prevailed on Zeyd to put away his wife, married her himself, and pretended this crime was dispensed with from heaven. He published the thirty-third chapter of his Koran in vindication of himself, and introduces God approving of this marriage, and rebuking him for abstaining so long from her, though he had his permission. In this instance he was guilty of adultery in marrying another man’s wife, and of blasphemy, in making God the author of this crime. To satisfy two of his jealous wives, who took him in the act of adultery with a servant, he swears against

(s) Maxims of Turkish Polity, Book II. Chap. viii.

(t) Koran, Chap. iii.

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similar offences for the future; but commits this crime in violation of his oath, and publishes the sixty-sixth chapter of the Koran, which permits the prophet to lie with a maid servant, and allows Moslems to violate their oaths. The Arabian impostor limited the number of wives and concubines of each person to four, but reserved to himself the privilege of marrying as many as he pleased (*v*). He obliged others, who had two, three, or four wives, to treat them in the same manner; but retained the liberty of using his own wives, according to his discretion. He prohibited his disciples to marry near relations; but, in the thirty-third chapter, introduces God, exempting him from that prohibition, and allowing him to marry whomsoever he pleased, without any regard to degrees of consanguinity. Mahomet, being repulsed at the siege of Mecca, made a league with the inhabitants; but next year violated the treaty, by surprising that city; and, to justify his perfidy, allowed his followers to disregard promises or leagues, made with infidels (*u*). In consequence of this doctrine, and the example of the prophet, Ricaut mentions several instances of perfidy among the Turks, who assume it as a maxim, that they should not keep faith with unbelievers, where the breach contributes to the propagation of religion (*w*). But besides these, we find several

(*v*) Koran, Chap. iv. and xxxiii.  
Book I. Chap. xxii,

(*u*) Ricaut's Maxims,  
(*w*) Ibid,

other occasional precepts and prohibitions of the SECT.  
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Köran : Mahomet prohibited wine and other inebriating liquors, of which some of his principal officers having drank to excess, excited much riot and confusion in the camp. This prohibition was extremely necessary in sultry climates, where the fumes of liquor inflame to the highest degree, and render men frantic. The prophet also forbade cards, dice, tables, and other games of chance, as the frequent occasion of quarrels and disturbances. The gospel does not absolutely prohibit the moderate use of wine, nor any innocent amusement ; but forbids its professors to drink to excess, or to covet other mens goods, which is the usual foundation of the passion for gaming, and renders that vice so criminal and destructive to societies.

Writers have differed widely with respect to the Character of  
Mahomet.  
character of Mahomet, and the motives which influenced him to a reformation of religion. Some think him actuated by enthusiasm, others by ambition : some have represented him as a monster destitute of abilities and of every virtue ; while others consider him as endowed with all the virtues. However, most authors have in one respect or other mistaken the character and motives of the Arabian impostor. The laudable ambition of restoring religion to its purity, and abrogating the superstitious rites, and idolatrous practices, then prevalent in his country, might possibly have been the first motive, that influenced him to attempt a reformation.

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reformation. He could not at first have foreseen the successes which attended him; he could not have aspired to the power, to which he afterwards arrived; nor expected to gratify any ambition, except that of reforming his countrymen from ignorance and superstition. The Pagan Arabs were in a deplorable state before his time, and he might have thought it a meritorious work to bring them to the knowledge of the true God from idolatry and corruption. Though guilty of many crimes he must have carefully concealed them, and at least have observed some exterior decorum in his actions. Adultery, perjury, blasphemy, and other offences, must have blasted his reputation as a prophet, if known to the world. These crimes he must have hid, until he got at the head of an army, and acquired the reputation of generosity, charity, bravery and other virtues, which captivate mankind. The prophet of Arabia doubtless possessed many splendid virtues, tarnished and blended with many enormous crimes, arising from his predominant passions of lust and ambition. He, at first, directed the latter to the laudable purpose of reforming his countrymen in religion and morals; but afterwards, to the destruction of mankind for the acquisition of power. He recommended virtues which he did not practise; inveighed against many vices which he himself committed; and left convincing proofs that he was actuated by a love of fame, and not by a sincere regard

regard for religion and virtue. The impostor borrowed his ideas of fasting, almsgiving, and other virtues, from the gospels, though he but feebly imitates those great originals. He requires and enforces those duties on narrow principles; confines the exercise of them to those of his own sect; and does not extend them to all mankind indiscriminately, with that large, and benevolent spirit, enjoined by the gospel. Were he a teacher sent from God, he would have furnished the world, if possible, with a more perfect system of religion than the Christian; and improved on former systems, instead of debasing them, just as Christianity was an improvement on the law.

The author of the Koran was, notwithstanding his crimes, serviceable to his country in some instances, by restoring the worship of the true God, abolishing idolatry, and forbidding his countrymen to steal, commit fornication, forge calumnies, or kill children, as the Pagan Arabs were accustomed to do (x). His knowledge of the gospel assisted him in reforming the doctrines and manners of the Arabs. The Mahometan system contained many tenets of the Christian institution, and so far was productive of salutary effects, and preferable to the monstrous idolatry that prevailed in Arabia. He prohibited the use of the three arrows, which were employed in divination, and deposited in the temple of Mecca, with a blank on one,

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He abolished some barbarous and superstitious practices of the Pagan Arabs.

(x) Koran, Chap. vi.

and

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and the following inscriptions on the two others, "My Lord hath commanded; my Lord hath forbidden." Before they engaged in marriage, undertook a journey, or any momentous business, they generally consulted those arrows. If the second was drawn, it was looked on as an assent of God; if the third, as a mark of disapprobation; if the blank was drawn, they mixed them up, until a decisive answer was given by one of the others. The prophet abolished several other superstitious customs relative to camels, sheep, and other animals, which the Pagan Arabs turned loose, and exempted from labour, in honour of their idols (y). This people refused to widows and orphans any share in the properties of their husbands or fathers, on pretence that they only should inherit, who are able to fight (z). They considered the birth of a daughter as a misfortune, and the death of one a blessing; frequently buried daughters alive, and even put males to death to fulfil a vow that, if they had a certain number of sons, they would offer one of them in sacrifice (a). The Arabian reformer abrogated these and other barbarous practices which were common among that people, before his appearance in the world.

Many doctrines of Mahomet borrowed, and inferior to those in the originals.

Having considered the character of Mahomet, the causes that contributed to his successes, and some of the means which he employed in propa-

(y) Koran, Chap. v. and vi.

(z) Koran, Chap. iv.

(a) Sale, Sect. 5.

gating his religion, let us take a view of the Ko-<sup>SECT.</sup>  
ran; shew whence he derived many of its pre-<sup>IV.</sup>  
cepts; and point out their effects on the welfare  
of society. Mahomet, like almost all reformers,  
accommodated his religion, in some degree, to  
the prejudices of his converts; and laboured to  
unite, into one system, their discordant opinions.  
He was no stranger to the law and the gospel, as  
I have already observed; from these he selected  
several tenets, and blended them with the popular  
traditions and superstitions of his countrymen.  
The Koran is a strange compound of heterogeneous  
opinions, and contains excellent moral pre-  
cepts, and sublime descriptions of God, interspersed  
with contradictions, blasphemies, and ridiculous  
falshoods. According to the Mahometan (*b*) creed,  
there is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet;  
mens actions are registered; and at the resurrec-  
tion and judgment, they shall be summoned to  
give an account of their conduct; and rewarded  
or punished according to their works. All faith-  
ful Mussulmen shall be transported into a state of  
glory; while the excuses of others will not be ad-  
mitted. Their actions are weighed in a balance,  
and they, whose good works outweigh the bad,  
enter into paradise; if the bad preponderate, they  
are cast into hell: if the scales are equally poised  
they are sent into an intermediate state and ex-  
cluded from the happiness enjoyed by the righte-

(*b*) Mahometanism explained by Mahomet Baradan.

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ous. If a man slander his neighbour, some good action shall be taken out of the slanderer's balance, and added to that of the person slandered; and if the slanderer have no good works, God will diminish the punishment of the person slandered, and augment that of the slanderer: so that if we injure our neighbour, in fortune or reputation, such a subtraction shall be made from our good works, or such an addition to our punishment, as will fully manifest the divine justice. This was an useful doctrine, but did not originate with the prophet, being entertained long before his time, by the ancient Persians (*c*). The Koran prohibits adultery, false witness, avarice, usury, oppression, lying, gaming, swine's flesh, wine, eating blood, whatever died of itself, was killed by a blow, or by another beast: all which prohibitions, and many others, contain little more than was already suggested by the practice of Jews and Christians, or by the spirit or letter of the sacred writings (*d*). The Koran permits of polygamy and divorce; repeatedly enjoins pilgrimages to Mecca; and promises paradise and pardon to those, who perform them (*e*). It requires a perjurer to feed and clothe ten poor of his religion, or to emancipate a Mahometan slave, to atone for his crime (*f*); while

(*c*) Hyde Hist. Religionis vet. Persarum, Cap. xix. and xxxiii.

(*d*) Ross's Religions, Sect. 6.

(*e*) Koran, Chap. ii. iii. xxii.

(*f*) Mahomet Baradan.

the Christian institution gives no sanction to per-<sup>S E C T.</sup>  
jury, and allows no profanation of the name of <sup>IV.</sup> God. The Koran enjoins charity and good works, but limits them to Mahometans; while the gospel extends works of charity and loving kindness to all men, of whatever religion. The Mahometan code threatens wilful murder with severe penalties in the next world, but allows it to be compounded for in this, by paying a fine, and redeeming a Moslem from captivity (*g*); while the Mosaic law, which evidently suggested the idea to the impostor, accepted of no composition; but required the life of the deliberate murderer. I have enumerated those rites, precepts, and prohibitions of the Koran to prove, that many of them were borrowed from the Mosaic and evangelical writings; and that they which differ from the scriptures are far inferior to them in justice and utility. This observation is of some importance; as it evinces, that the Mahometan code has no claim to originality; because then it would improve on, and not fall short of those revelations which preceded it, and which the impostor allowed to have God for their author. Hence we may perceive the falshood of an assertion in the History of the Roman Empire, that "the authority and station of Adam, Noah, Moses, Christ and Mahomet, rise in just gradation above each other (*b*)."  
If the historian means

(*g*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. I. folio.

(*b*) Gibbon, Chap. I. p. 205. quarto.

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temporal authority and station, it is evident that there was no such gradation; as Christ was inferior to Adam, Noah, and Moses in both these respects. If he means, that they rose in spiritual authority and station by just gradation from Moses up to Mahomet, the opinion is fallacious; as Mahomet was inferior to his predecessors, having wrought no miracles similar to those of Moses, Christ, and others who preceded him.

His unbor-  
rowed opi-  
nions false,  
contradicto-  
ry, and ridi-  
culous.

Those parts of the Koran, in which the prophet indulges his own fancy, and in which alone he could justly pretend to inspiration, are a rhapsody of lies, contradictions and ridiculous fables, which could impose only on the ignorant Arabs. He speaks of the books of Abraham, though he wrote none; says, that Christ spoke in his cradle as a man of forty or fifty years (*i*); and that Pharaoh's wife prayed, "Lord build me an house in paradise (*k*)."  
He affirms, that Ishmael was one of the prophets, and that Zacharias was dumb only for three days, though history acquaints us, that he was so for nine months. He makes the Virgin Mary the sister of Moses; calls the apostles his own scholars, though they flourished about six hundred years before he was born: and tells us, that Noah, Isaac, and Jacob, believed in the Koran. He alleges, that Solomon had an army composed of men, devils, and birds; and that a pis-

(*i*) Koran, Chap. iv.(*k*) Koran, Chap. lxvi.

mire cried out, "O pismires, pismires, hasten to your cells, lest Solomon's army tread you under foot (*l*):" that the queen of Sheba sent Solomon a message by the whoop; which bird Solomon dispatched back again to the queen, to know whether she sent it. He affirms, that a mountain was raised to overshadow the Israelites (*m*); that the winds were subject to Solomon, and blew at his command; that some devils built his palaces, that others dived into the sea, to bring him pearls, while some attended to execute his orders (*n*). Mahomet reckoned revenge among the attributes of God; and in the same chapter asks, who but God forgiveth sins (*o*)? Sometimes he affirms, that all devils shall be saved, and elsewhere those devils only, who obey his precepts (*p*). He asserts, that Solomon divided the moon into two parts, one of which fell into his lap, and the other on the ground, and that he soldered them again (*q*). He affirms, that in Noah's ark, the hog was generated of the elephant's dung, and a rat of the hog's dung; that a rat, having gnawed a hole in the ark, was put to flight by a cat, which leaped out of the brains of the lion (*r*). He says, he was the first that ever entered paradise; and elsewhere, that he found it inhabited by men and women. In some passages he assures us, that all

(*l*) Koran, Chap. xxvii. (*m*) Ibid. Chap. ii. (*n*) Ibid. Chap. xxxviii. (*o*) Ibid. Chap. iii. (*p*) Ibid. Chap. xii. (*q*) Ibid. Chap. x. (*r*) Mahomet Baradan.

s e c t. who live well, whether Jews, or Christians, may  
 IV. be saved; and in another passage, that none can  
 be saved, except they embrace the Koran (s). He requires his followers to believe, that when a corpse is laid in the grave, two angels examine it, concerning the Unity of God, and the mission of Mahomet. If the body answers right, it is suffered to rest in peace, and admitted into paradise; if not, it is beaten with iron maces, pressed with earth, and gnawed by ninety-nine dragons with seven heads each (t). He blasphemously boasts, that he has more knowledge than men and angels; ascribes to God all his impieties and impostures; and affirms the Koran to be inspired by the Holy Ghost; and Christ to be conceived by the smell of a rose. One general effect of this short abstract of the doctrines of the Koran, on the minds of Christians, must be, to render them enamoured of their own religion, and to convince them of the absurdity and falshood of the Mahometan. The God of truth could never dictate such gross contradictions, such shocking blasphemies, such romantic fables, and palpable falshoods. Where the Koran corresponds with the gospels, it tends to promote the welfare of society, and the happiness of individuals; where it differs from them, it is false, trifling, or contradictory, and teaches maxims pernicious to states. It is admitted, that

(s) Koran, Chap. xii. (t) Broughton, Art. Mahomedan.

this impostor abolished several abominable customs prevalent in Arabia, and was beneficial to his country, as a reformer of abuses and idolatrous practices. Yet it is undeniable, that his religion was in many instances absurd, and that some of its doctrines have produced direful effects, in all the societies where it has been adopted. These, to which he was most indebted for his conquests, were revenge, predestination, and a sensual paradise: these were the chief instruments in the hands of him and his successors, in disseminating his religion, and extending their conquests, as will presently appear from the history of the first Caliphs.

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Some have imagined, that Mahomet's idea of paradise was borrowed from the Jews (*u*); but it seems more probable that he derived it from the Persians, who believed in an earthly paradise, with beautiful virgins, gardens and rivers, into which none are admitted, until their actions are weighed in a scale: if the bad actions preponderate, they are flung into hell; if the good, they are admitted into paradise (*w*). This false prophet adapted his promises to the desires of men, who lived in a sultry climate; and who were delighted with women, rivers, shady groves, and delicious fruits. As the country was excessively hot and dry, and the people lewd and licentious, he

His paradise  
and hell.

(*u*) Sale, Sect. 4.

(*w*) Hyde's Sadder.

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promised to indulge them with gardens "where many rivers flow;" where they shall repose themselves under the shadow of the trees of paradise, be clothed in richest silks, and adorned with bracelets of gold and precious stones. "They shall, says this sensualist, enter into gardens, where they shall repose on fine beds lined with crimion:" "have wives, who shall not cast a look but upon them; and whom neither men or angels may touch before them." "They shall resemble coral and rubies. There are in those gardens women, that have eyes exceedingly black, and bodies exceedingly white, covered with vermilion (x)." Paradise affords its inhabitants so many pleasures and delights, that man would sink under them, did not God give unto every person the strength of an hundred for the enjoyment of them. There men shall be allowed to drink freely of wine, which will not intoxicate; enjoy perpetual youth, at whatever age they die; and shall be delighted with music, surpassing any thing ever heard by mortals (y). Mr. Gibbon assures us, that "instead of inspiring the blessed inhabitants of Paradise with a liberal taste for harmony and science, conversation and friendship; Mahomet idly celebrates the pearls and diamonds, the robes of silk, palaces of marble, dishes of gold, rich wines, artificial dainties, numerous attendants, and the whole train

(x) Koran, Chap. iv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xliii. ii. lv. lxxvi.

(y) Sale, Sect. 4.

of sensual and costly luxury." "Seventy-two SECT.  
IV. Houris, or black-eyed girls of resplendent beauty, blooming youth, virgin purity, and exquisite sensibility, will be created for the use of the meanest believer; a moment of pleasure will be prolonged to a thousand years, and his faculties will be increased an hundred fold to render him worthy of his felicity (z)." The favourites of God shall see his face morning and evening, a pleasure far exceeding all the pleasures of paradise (a): so that the happiness of the blessed, in the next life, according to the Mahometan system, consists not merely in corporeal enjoyments and sensual delights, but also in those, which are spiritual and refined. But we may easily guess, which of them was most likely to captivate a carnal people, who apprehended, beyond the grave, the same wants which they experienced in this life; and who tied camels at the tombs of the deceased, for their masters to ride on, as has been already observed. The Arabian impostor does not hint, that those pleasures are to be understood figuratively; and all orthodox Mahometans hope to enjoy them literally; while others are too refined for such gross ideas; and understand his descriptions in an allegorical sense. The epistles and gospels, on the contrary, convey no sensual or impure idea, nor attempt any thing puerile or particular, like Ma-

(z) Hist. Roman Empire, Chap. I. p. 218. Quarto.

(a) Sale, Sect. 4.

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homet's paradise; the pleasures offered by these, being represented to be such, "as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." And as Mahomet accommodated his rewards to the appetites of the sensual, so did he threaten them with torments grievous and insupportable. He thus describes the punishments of hell; they shall drink nothing but boiling, stinking water; breathe nothing but hot winds, dwell for ever in continual burning fire and smoke; eat nothing but briars and thorns, and the fruit of a tree that riseth out of the bottom of hell, whose branches resemble the heads of devils, and whose fruits shall be in their bellies like burning pitch (*b*).

Paradise and other doctrines contributed to his successes in Arabia.

Mahomet repeatedly enjoined his followers to wage war against infidels, declared it meritorious to rob, murder, and extirpate unbelievers, and promised a crown of martyrdom, and immediate admittance into paradise, to those slain in defence of the faith. The prophet prohibited his disciples to dispute about the Koran (*c*), but enjoins them to fight for it (*d*): "When you meet with unbelievers, says he, cut off their heads, kill them, make them prisoners, and never cease to persecute them, until they have laid down their arms and submitted to you (*e*)."

"O ye that are true believers, be patient in your adversities, fight for

(*b*) Koran, Chap. vii. xxxviii. xliii.

(*c*) Ibid. Chap. iv.

(*d*) Ibid. Chap. ii.

(*e*) Ibid. Chap. of Battles.

the faith, fear God, and you shall be happy (*f*).” S E C T.  
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“ O ye that believe in God, esteem no man to be elected of God, that is not of your religion :” “ I will cover the offences of them that assemble to fight for the faith, I will open to them the gates of paradise, wherein flow many rivers, to recompense their good works (*g*).” In consequence of these doctrines, and the practice of the first publishers of the Koran, Mahometan divines call the sword the key of heaven and hell, and maintain that the least drop of blood, spilled in the cause of God and religion, is acceptable to him : whereas severe threats are denounced against those who desert, or refuse to engage in, or contribute to the support of holy wars (*h*). The effects of those doctrines were sensibly felt in the battles of Bedar and Muta : the ambition of dying in the cause of God and his prophet, and the hope of admission into heaven, inspired them with courage, and rendered them irresistible (*i*). The Saracens buried those, who fought for religion, covered with blood, from a persuasion that all martyrs shall be raised, on the day of judgment, with blood upon their throats, and led directly to paradise, without being called to an account (*k*). In consequence of this, and other doctrines of the Koran, the Saracens endured the greatest hardships, rather than

(*f*) Koran, Chap. iii.    (*g*) Ibid. Chap. iii.    (*h*) Ibid. Chap. iii. and ix.    (*i*) Smyth's Manners of the Turks.  
(*k*) Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens.

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surrender a fortification, and submitted to certain death, not only without murmur, but even with joy, rather than religion should suffer (*l*). In the infancy of Mahometanism, they who opposed the Koran, if taken in battle, were put to death without mercy; but when that religion was established, beyond all danger of being subverted, Mahometans gave the vanquished their choice of three offers: to embrace the Koran, and be entitled to all the privileges of Moslems; to pay tribute, and profess their own religion, provided it was not idolatrous nor immoral; or decide the quarrel by the sword. In this latter case, if Moslems prevailed, captive women and children were reduced to absolute servitude; and men, taken in battle, were slain, or disposed of, at the pleasure of the prince (*m*). It would be tedious to enumerate the several battles fought by the impostor, and the various means employed by him, in establishing his religion, and reducing his countrymen to an obedience of his authority. We have recited the doctrines which assisted him in defeating the Coreshites, the most powerful of all the Arabian tribes; and shall only add that, in consequence of his victory over these, the other tribes readily submitted to his authority, in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. The different tribes, before divided, now united their efforts, to extend their conquests

(*l*) Smyth's Manners of the Turks.(*m*) Sale, Sect. 6.

and religion; nor can we be surpris'd at the success<sup>IV.</sup>es of a fierce people, united under such a general as Mahomet, when influenced by his doctrines, and opposed by the enemies which his successors had to encounter.

Mahomet, finding himself established in regal and pontifical power in Arabia, dispatched ambassadors to neighbouring princes, to invite them to embrace his religion; and was furnished with a pretext of commencing hostilities against them if they should refuse to comply. This was the first step towards the extension of the empire of the Arabs, and the foundation of the conquests afterwards obtained by him, and the caliphs who succeeded him. He died meditating further conquests, and bequeathed to his successors the Koran and its doctrines, and also an example that they should follow his steps. He died prince and pontiff, head in temporal and spiritual affairs, under the title of caliph, a title transmitted to his successors, who were kings and high priests for three hundred years. When the empire was overturned by the Tartars, the caliphs lost both the name and authority; were stripped of all temporal jurisdiction; and confined to the discharge of the sacred function only (n). In Turkey, Persia, and the Mogul empire, those ministers of religion are appointed by the respective princes

Death of  
Mahomet,  
and estab-  
lishment  
of the Ca-  
liphat.

(n) Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.

**S E C T. IV.** as interpreters of the laws, and deposed by them at pleasure (o). In the Ottoman empire, the musti is a mere instrument in the hands of the emperor, obliged to ratify all his mandates, and regularly attends his retinue to confirm his edicts (p). The sultan encourages a veneration for the musti, pays him great external homage himself, and pretends to consult him in all doubts and difficulties (q). When he has resolved to make war or peace, to put to death a bashaw or vizier, or meditates any other important business, he asks his opinion: if the musti should refuse to approve of his most iniquitous orders, he is deposed, degraded, and put to death, and another is appointed, more flexible and complying. The concurrence of the musti, justifies the sultan's conduct, and silences the discontents of the people, who are persuaded, that whatever he consents to is approved by the Deity. Such is the final issue of the sacerdotal office, established by Mahomet, and the caliphs who succeeded him. At its first institution it was united with despotism, and when almost annihilated itself, lent its feeble aid to support despotic power, acquired by imposture. We shall now examine the means by which the caliphs were enabled to extend their conquests and religion, after the death of the prophet, and

(o) Prideaux's Life of Mahomet.  
Manners.

(p) Smyth's  
(q) Ricaut's Maxims, Book II. Ch. iv.

the influence of his doctrines on the state of society. S E C T. IV.

After Mahomet's death, the Arabs being a restless people, and not sufficiently impressed with a sense of his religion, rebelled against Abubeker, and refused to pay him the usual tribute of tithes and alms, and perform other rites required by the prophet (r). The new caliph sent an able general, named Caled, to suppress this rebellion; and to his courage and conduct we are chiefly to attribute the conquest of Syria, and the establishment of Mahometanism. He defeated the rebels in a set battle, obtained considerable plunder, and reduced them to servitude. This general had an implacable aversion for the enemies of his religion, or apostates from it; and refused to spare even those who expressed the strongest marks of renouncing their errors. The Greek emperor, and other princes, who paid little regard to the Saracens during their domestic quarrels, now experienced the force of their arms. When Abubeker had reduced rebels and apostates to submission, he resolved to compel his neighbours to embrace his religion, or pay tribute (s), in compliance with an injunction of the prophet, who commanded his followers to fight until all men were converted (t). The caliph dispatched Caled with

(r) Ockley.  
Ch. viii.

(s) Koran, Ch. ix.

(t) Ibid.

**SECT.** troops to Irak, and this zealous officer obliged the  
**IV.** Persians to submit to the empire of the Saracens (*u*). Abubeker, having assembled some of his friends, was advised to invade Syria, and to acquaint his adherents in different parts of Arabia, that he intended to send true believers into that country to rescue it from infidels. They who received intelligence of his intentions, expressed great readiness of complying with his commands; and a considerable army was levied from the different provinces of Arabia to march into Syria. In this expedition the Arabs defeated the emperor Heraclius, and obtained great booty; and their successes prompted the inhabitants of Mecca, who had hitherto stood neuter, cheerfully to take up arms in order to partake of the spoil. Amrou is dispatched, at the head of troops, to Palestine, and Obeidah into Syria, on pretence of compelling men to embrace the Mahometan faith. The latter of those generals, being worsted by the Greek emperor, is recalled, and Caled is appointed in his room; a successful leader, who took several important places in Syria, and obliged the inhabitants to pay tribute (*w*). At the siege of Bosra, Caled cried out, "Fight, fight; paradise, paradise:" in consequence of this speech the Saracens fought like lions; took this wealthy town, and reduced its inhabitants to the yoke; while priests

(*u*) Ockley.(*w*) Ibid,

and monks ran about the streets, in vain calling upon God, whose laws they had violated, and whose providence had delivered them into the hands of their enemies (x).

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The emperor Heraclius sends Verdan, with an army, to the relief of Damascus, which was besieged by Caled; and this general dispatches Derar with a small force to make a diversion. Derar, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, advanced against Verdan's troops, on a principle advanced by one of his soldiers, and founded on experience; that "it was common for Mussulmen to rout a great army with an handful of men." In the beginning of the engagement, Derar was taken prisoner, and his troops would have fled, had not Omeirah cried out with a loud voice, "What! don't you know that whosoever turns his back upon his enemies offends God and his prophet? That the gates of paradise shall be open to none but such as fight for religion?" These words revived the spirits of the soldiers, and prevailed on them to rally, and maintain their ground, until succours had arrived. Caled soon came to their assistance, entirely defeated the Grecians, and returned immediately to the siege of Damascus. Heraclius dispatched Verdan a second time, with seventy thousand men, to raise the siege, which so alarmed Caled that he summoned all the great

It assisted him in reducing Damascus.

(x) Ockley.

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officers, employed in different quarters, to hasten to his assistance. When the two armies were in sight of each other, Calad rode through the ranks, and exhorted them to "fight in earnest in the cause of religion, and to be sure not to turn their backs, and so be damned for their pains," as the prophet expresses it (y). The Greek general, though his army far surpassed that of the Saracens in number, wished to decline the combat, knowing that his soldiers would not fight so desperately as enthusiasts, who were sure of martyrdom if slain in the propagation of the Mahometan religion. His apprehensions were well founded; the Saracens entirely defeated the Christians; killed in one day fifty thousand of them; and obtained plunder of inestimable value. When some hungry Arabs, particularly those of Mecca, heard of the successes of their countrymen, they solicited permission to go into Syria, from a desire of sharing in the plunder, and of exchanging the uncultivated desarts of Arabia Petrea for the delicacies of Damascus. The Saracens returned to the siege of this city, elated with success, and almost certain of victory, while the besieged deliberated whether they should surrender, and pay tribute for the preservation of their lives. Thomas, the emperor's son-in-law, objected to the proposal, and inveighed against the Arabs as poor, naked,

(y) Koran, Ch. viii.

and barefooted wretches, far inferior to the Damascenes in numbers and discipline. He was told S E C T.  
IV. in answer, that "these men fought desperately under the greatest disadvantages, and believed stedfastly that every man who is slain, enters immediately into paradise, and every man of the enemy, into hell." Thomas however prevailed on the Damascenes to resist the Saracens, and even forced them to retire a little, notwithstanding a speech of Caled previous to the engagement. This general exhorts his soldiers to persevere, "since they shall rest after death;" and adds, "that is the best rest, which shall never be succeeded by any labour." We find even a Mahometan woman, whose husband was slain, solicit death, fired by enthusiasm, and by the cant of generals. "Happy art thou, said she, my dear; thou art gone to thy Lord, who first joined us together, and then parted us asunder; I will revenge thy death, and endeavour, to the utmost of my power, to come to the place where thou art." Having spoken these words, she neither wept nor wailed, but armed herself for the battle, and fought desperately until she was slain. The inhabitants of Damascus, pressed hard by the Saracens, were ready to capitulate when the city was betrayed to Caled, who attacked them immediately, in order to anticipate a surrender, and obtain booty for his soldiers. All the inhabitants of Damascus were obliged to quit the city, except

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such as consented to pay tribute. Abubeker died the day on which it was taken, and was succeeded by Omar, to whom he bequeathed the Caliphat (z).

It assisted  
Obeidah in  
reducing  
Hems, Je-  
rusalem,  
and other  
places.

Omar sent some of his generals to invade the Persian empire, and make conquests in Irak: this caliph took the command from Caled, who was too violent and fierce, and conferred it on Abu Obeidah, who was mild and gentle. Abdolla, surrounded by an host of Christians, exhorts his troops in words to this purpose: "Either we shall succeed, and have all the plunder, or else die, and so the next way to paradise:" having uttered these words, he fell upon the Christians, and made havock among them. The soldiers of Obeidah sustained great damages at the siege of Balbec, from the engines planted on the walls of that city, and from a sally of its inhabitants. This general told his chief officers, that the slaughter of the soldiers was decreed by God, and enjoined patience and perseverance to his troops; since God promised success to those who persevered, and the degree of martyrdom to those who were slain in the propagation of the faith. The Saracens having, as usual, prevailed, seized on Herbis, governor of that city, and brought him before Obeidah. When the governor saw the condition to which he was reduced, and the smallness of the

(z) Ockley.

enemies

enemies number, " he bit his fingers with rage and indignation." The Mahometan leader took advantage of this circumstance, and acquainted Herbis, that the number of true believers always appears greater in the eyes of idolators than it really is; that angels help *them*, as they did Mahomet at the battle of Bedar (a); that they depend on those heavenly auxiliaries for assistance; and though they never saw them themselves, it was sufficient for them that they were seen by their enemies (b).

Such was the influence of enthusiasm in the wars of the first caliphs, that a Mahometan officer signalized himself in the battle of Hems, from a prospect of the joys of Mahomet's paradise. He thus expressed himself aloud, " Methinks I see the black-eyed girls looking upon me, one of which, if she should appear in the world, all mankind would die for love of her." Having spoken these words, he charged his enemies with violence, and made havock wherever he went, until he was killed by a javelin from the hands of the governor. The emperor Heraclius exerted all his strength to conquer those enthusiasts, and appointed Mahon general of such an army as never appeared in Syria since the invasion of the Saracens. The Greeks began the onset with such valour and impetuosity, that the Mahometans

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All Syria,  
Egypt, and  
part of Per-  
sia, submit  
to the Sara-  
cens in the  
Caliphat of  
Omar.

(a) Koran, Ch. ix.

(b) Ockley, p. 204.

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turned their backs; and were prevailed on to rally by women, posted in the rear, who attacked them so warmly with blows and invective, that they chose to face their enemies rather than endure them. They were so hard pressed by the Greeks, that they forgot the cant of their generals, who told them, before the engagement, that paradise was before them, and hell-fire behind them; and even Obeidah, who used those words, was forced to retreat. Night at length separated the combatants, and in the mean time, Obeidah told his men, that their enemies suffered the same pain that they did, but had not the same reward to expect for their labours (c). The Saracens, who were victorious in the end, killed one hundred and fifty thousand Christians, took forty thousand prisoners, and lost, comparatively, but few of their own soldiers. Obeidah marches to the siege of Jerusalem, and proposes the usual conditions, of fighting, embracing Mahometanism, or paying tribute. The inhabitants of that city having resolved on resistance, that general strengthened himself with a reinforcement of fresh troops, again offers the above terms, and threatens those who shall reject them, with men who love death better than Christians do wine, or hogs flesh, as that leader sarcastically expressed it. Each of the Saracen generals, in their prayers before Jérusa-

(c) Ockley, p. 237.

Jerusalem, uses the words which Mahomet puts into the S E C T. IV. mouth of Moses to the children of Israel: "O people, enter ye into the holy land, which God hath decreed for you (*d*)."  
These words, which accorded with their present designs, were understood by the Saracens to relate to themselves as well as to the Israelites, and animated the soldiers to persevere in the siege. At the end of four months the besieged, able to make no further resistance, capitulate and submit to the payment of tribute, and to other severe conditions, for the protection of their lives and fortunes, and a liberty of conscience (*e*). The same year in which Jerusalem was taken, the Saracens defeated the Persians, and obtained considerable booty, clothes adorned with gold and jewels, vast sums of money, and an armoury stored with all sorts of ammunition.

The next place they laid siege to was Aleppo, which they took by surprise, after a siege of five months, and marched immediately to Antioch, the residence of the Greek emperor. Heraclius was vanquished by the treachery of his own people, the metropolis of Syria surrendered to Obeidah, and that prince escaped privately to Constantinople with few friends. In the mean time, Calad was successful in another quarter; and several towns surrendered to him as far as the Euphrates.

Other places submit to them in his Caliphate.

(*d*) Koran, Ch. v.

(*e*) Ockley, p. 246.

SECT. IV. After the capitulation of Jerusalem, Omar dispatched Amrou to conquer Egypt, and propagate religion in that country; Constantine the emperor's son opposed his progress, but was not successful. The Saracens displayed their accustomed valour, and were, as usual, victorious: such was the zeal of those enthusiasts, that even a beardless youth had the rashness to fight one of Constantine's officers, who was far more robust, and who killed not only him, but two or three more. This stripling used to say, that he was not influenced by the delicacies of Syria to go thither, but that his desire was to fight for the service of God, seeking his favour, and that of his apostle. Before he engaged the Christian officer, he took leave of his friends, and told them, they should meet again, and drink of the waters which belong to the apostle of God in paradise (*f*). Tripoli, Tyre, Cæsarea, and all other places of Syria, which had hitherto maintained an opposition, surrendered at length to the Saracens; and Amrou besieged Pharmah, Cairo, and other parts of Egypt, and took them by force, stratagem, or treachery. After the surrender of Alexandria, all Egypt submitted, and each inhabitant compounded for his life, fortune, and liberty of conscience, for two ducats a year. Omar, during his caliphate, banished all Jews and Christians from

(*f*) Ockley, p. 333.

Arabia, and subdued Syria, Egypt, and other territories of Africa, with great part of Persia. At his death, Othman, who succeeded him, turned his arms against Persia, entirely destroyed that country, and transferred it to the caliphs. We now see the origin of the great empire founded by the Saracens, and enlarged by the authority and wealth of the caliphs; to whom the Koran (g) allocates a fifth of the spoils taken in war, together with a part of the tribute paid by the inhabitants of conquered towns and provinces. The caliphs were enabled by wealth, territory, and authority, thus acquired, by the cant of generals, and enthusiasm of soldiers, to extend their conquests still further, when backed by hardy, zealous, and temperate troops. Such were the doctrines and means employed by Mahomet and the other caliphs, in extending their conquests and propagating their religion: such were the immediate effects of primitive Mahometanism on the lives of its professors, and the welfare of communities!

The successes of Mahomet and his successors have arisen chiefly, but not entirely, from the doctrines of the impostor; other causes contributed to promote the victories of the Saracens, as I have already observed. The natural bravery of the Arabs, the imbecility of the neighbouring

Other causes concurred with Mahometanism in advancing the conquests of the Saracens.

(g) Ch. viii.

Z 3

nations,

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nations, the perfidy of some Christians, who betrayed the rest in the course of those wars, and the virtues of the first Caliphs, all contributed to the conquests of the Saracens. The impostor himself was well fitted to impose a false religion on mankind, and richly furnished with natural endowments; “beautiful in his person, of a subtle wit, agreeable behaviour, liberal to the poor, courteous to all, valiant in fight (*h*).” According to the Mahometan religion, the duties of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, were so pleasing to God, that Omar said, Prayer carries us half way to God, fasting brings us to the door of his palace, and alms procures us admission. The duty of fasting was deemed so momentous, that Mahomet used to say it was the gate of religion, and that the odour of the mouth of him that fasts, is more grateful to God than that of musk (*i*). Abubeker, Mahomet’s successor in the caliphate, possessed many virtues; he was chaste, temperate, and disinterested; and divided all the money in the treasury every Friday, according to men’s merits; while Omar distributed once a week to the necessitous, and maintained that his practice was preferable to that of Abubeker; since the things of this world were intended for the relief of men’s necessities, and not for the reward of merit, which properly

(*h*) Sale, to the Reader,  
homed.

(*i*) Broughton, Art. Mahomed.

belongs to another world. But besides those <sup>SECT. IV.</sup> causes, which have contributed to the victories of the Saracens, we may find in the Koran (*k*) a doctrine that was extremely useful in promoting their conquests. Mahomet absolutely prohibited the use of wine to his followers; and to abstemiousness Sir Paul Ricaut (*l*) ascribes great part of the success which attended the caliphs. In times of primitive Mahometanism, they strictly abstained from wine; and the conscientious will still not drink, buy, nor sell it, nor even use money made by the sale of that liquor. The Persians and Turks in general, drink freely; and when reproached by Christians with drinking wine, contrary to the precepts of the Koran, they say it is with them, as with some Christians, whose religion forbids drunkenness, and who yet drink to excess, and even glory in their debaucheries (*m*).

Should we compare the doctrines of Mahomet, and the means which he employed in propagating his religion, with those made use of by Christ and his apostles; and the effects of primitive Mahometanism, and primitive Christianity; the contrast would appear striking, furnish a strong proof of the superior excellence of the Christian code, and point out the baleful influence of that religion, which was propagated by the sword, and founded

Comparison of Christianity and Mahometanism in the tendency and effects of their doctrines.

(*k*) Ch. ii. and v.

(*l*) Maxims, Book III. Ch. xi.

(*m*) Sale, Sect. 5.

SECT. <sup>IV.</sup> on imposture. I shall refer my readers to the learned and elegant discourses of a late writer (n), for a comparison of Christianity and Mahometanism in their history, evidence, and effects; and shall make but few observations on a subject, so ably discussed by that author. The gospel was not published in times of ignorance, nor to a barbarous people; the sword was not the instrument, by which it was promulgated. Christianity had not its rise in an obscure part of the earth, inhabited by thieves, destitute of learning; but in the Augustan age, when science flourished. The doctrines of Christ were spiritual and refined; while those of Mahomet were adapted to the fancies and appetites of a sensual and ignorant people. Mahometanism was propagated by violence; while Christianity was disseminated by the homely discourses of a few simple and illiterate men, endued by God with miraculous gifts. The Koran was accommodated to the ruling passion of the Arabs; while the gospel opposed the prejudices of men, and enjoined actions most painful to the corruptions of our nature. Mahomet was not illiterate, as he pretended; and even if he was, he could more easily have imposed any doctrines on the ignorant Arabs, than the apostles could theirs on the learned and refined. The Mahometan religion led to conquest and glory; whereas the Christian pro-

(n) White's Sermons.

mised nothing to its votaries except sufferings and tribulations. The Gentile world, who hated the Jews, were averse from Christianity, which originated among that people; while the Jews disliked a religion, that included all mankind; and reduced them from their boasted superiority to the same level with Heathen nations. Bayle acknowledges, that no force was employed in propagating the gospel for three centuries; but affirms, that it was disseminated by the sword from the third to the sixth century, as the Koran was afterwards. Though I might perhaps justly question the assertion of the gainfayer, I shall accede to it at present, and shew, that he can deduce no conclusion from that concession, which can in the smallest degree injure the credit of Christianity. The gospel was propagated, though not established, long before princes took up the sword in its defence; and was not indebted for its propagation to those, who established and supported it by their power. The internal evidence of the Christian system, and the miracles of its professors, made multitudes of converts in many countries, before the age of Constantine. Christianity was disseminated, though not established, when that emperor undertook its defence; no violence was employed for three hundred years in propagating it; whereas the Koran owed its progress and establishment, from the very beginning, entirely to the sword.

If

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Comparison  
of the lives  
and doc-  
trines of  
Christ and  
Mahomet.

If we compare the lives and doctrines of Christ, and the prophet of Arabia, the contrast will appear striking, at first view: the former did not promise brutal pleasures in Elysium, like Pagans and Mahometans, but pure and spiritual enjoyments, such as could not enter into the heart of man to conceive. Christ prohibited not only immodest looks, and obscene conversation, but even impure thoughts; and recommended self-denial, temperance, charity, forgiveness, and resignation, not only by precept, but also by example. Christ was spotless and without sin; Mahomet, though possessed of some shining qualities, was a robber, perjurer, murderer, adulterer, and fornicator. The former, inculcated peace, patience, and love; the latter, war, revenge, and hatred: the former, checked men's lusts by monogamy; the latter, inflamed them by indulging his followers with a plurality of wives. Christ permitted the moderate use of all God's creatures; the other prohibited wine and swines flesh. The former commanded men to search the scriptures; the other forbid the Koran to be translated into other languages, or read by the people. The one propagated his religion by his own virtues and those of his followers; the other by tyranny, and acts of violence: the disciples of one were innocent fishermen; while those of the other robbed and murdered, on pretence of propagating the religion of the prophet,

Humility

Humility and forgiveness were the characteristics S E C T.  
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of Christ; while, according to Mr. Gibbon, "the stern passions of pride and revenge were kindled in the bosom of the prophet of Arabia." The disciples of the former were honest and humane; while that historian denominates the followers of the latter "holy robbers, who were eager to execute or to prevent the order of a massacre (o)." The gospel was propagated by the miracles and virtues of its first professors; while "the use of fraud and perfidy, of cruelty and injustice, were often subservient to the propagation of Mahometanism," as Mr. Gibbon (p) expresses it. Tribulation was denounced against, and actually experienced by early converts to Christianity; while this writer affirms, that "the encreasing myriads, who acknowledged Mahomet as their king and prophet, had been compelled by his arms, or allured by his prosperity (q)." Sherlock (r), in one of his discourses proves, that the Christian and Mahometan are the only revelations which pretend to be a rule of religion to all countries. This learned writer appeals to natural religion, calls upon her to determine which of those two is most consonant to reason, and has God for its author, and proves that the Christian alone has any

(o) Hist. of the Roman Empire, Chap. 1. p. 239 and 250.

(p) Ibid. Chap. 1. p. 250, quarto.

(q) Ibid. Chap. li. p. 276.

(r) Vol. I. Serm. IX.

SECT. IV. just claim to a divine revelation. His words are these : " Go to your natural religion ; lay before her Mahomet and his disciples, arrayed in armour, and in blood ; riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and tens of thousands who fell by his victorious sword. Shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements ; shew her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and wives ; let her see his adultery, and hear him alledge revelation, and his divine commission to justify his lust, and his oppression. When she is tired with this prospect, then shew her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and perverse. Let her see him in his most retired privacies ; let her follow him to the mount and hear his devotions, and supplications unto God. Carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourses ; let her see him injured, but not provoked ; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, " Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." When natural religion has viewed both, ask, Which is the prophet of

of God? But her answer we have already had, SECT. IV. when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the Centurion, who attended at the cross; by him she spoke and said, Truly this was the Son of God."

We have the testimony of Kabizi Agam, a learned Turk, who was educated with prejudices against the Christian religion, that the precepts of the gospel are preferable to those of the Koran. Being called upon to abjure this opinion, and threatened with death in case of a refusal, he maintained it with firmness, and voluntarily endured death, rather than renounce it. In consequence of his obstinacy, as it was called, a terrifying edict was issued out, that all, who maintained similar doctrines, should share the same fate (s). Here we are furnished with one reason of Bayle's (t) assertion, that there are fewer converts from Mahometanism to Christianity, than from Christianity to Mahometanism. But several other causes have concurred, to prevent converts from the Mahometan to the Christian religion, and to make profelytes from the gospel to the Koran. Mahometans employ rewards and punishments for the purpose of making profelytes, and exempt from taxes converts from the gospel. According to the Mahometan faith, the wicked, after a certain time, are released from the torments of hell; out of

(s) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. V. folio.

(t) Life of Mahomet.

which,

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which, according to Christianity, there is no redemption. The Koran allows private revenge, so pleasing to the corruptions of human nature ; and its professors speak respectfully of Moses and Christ, so that Jews and Christians are easily converted. As Mahometanism was propagated by the sword, and intended to derive its chief support from the ignorance of its votaries, the prophet prohibited the study of philosophy, and made it capital to dispute about the Koran, to sell it to strangers, to translate (u) it, or even to attempt to convert a Mussulman (w). Should Mahometans be allowed even to argue about the Koran, it would be next to impossible to convert or confute them. The prophet himself declared, that of twelve thousand sentences in the Koran, only four thousand are true ; so that the clearest refutation in a thousand instances cannot induce a Mussulman to change his opinion ; as these may possibly be some of the eight thousand falsehoods (x). There is one reason which renders it extremely dangerous, to attempt to alter or oppose the Mahometan religion, in countries where it is professed. The authority of the supreme magistrate is founded upon the Koran ; the doctrines of this book are the basis of his throne ; so that any change in religion must disturb his government, and a religious innovator is considered as an enemy to the prince.

(u) Ross's Religions.

(w) Smyth's Manners.

(x) Sale, Sect. 3.

Having examined the influence of Mahometanism in the time of the first caliphs, I proceed to point out its most remarkable effects, during its continuance and establishment. Primitive Mahometans looked on the victories, and extensive conquests of Mahomet, and his immediate successors, as happy effects of the doctrines of the impostor. But every man, who consults reason or history, must be convinced that extent of empire does not constitute the happiness of individuals or communities; and fatal experience may convince the subjects of the Grand Signior, that while their ancestors were extending their conquests, and disseminating their religion, they were fabricating chains for their descendants, and augmenting the authority of a despotic tyrant. The territories, acquired by the three first caliphs, are to be ascribed in a great degree to Mahometanism, and the foundation of the extensive conquests afterwards obtained by those who succeeded them. Sir Paul Ricaut (y) thus describes the extent of the Ottoman empire in his time, "all the delightful fields of Asia, says this historian, the pleasant plains of Tempe and Thrace, all the plenty of Egypt, and the fertility of the Nile, the luxury, the substance of Peloponnesus, Athens, Lemnos, Chios, and Mitylene, with other isles of the Egean sea; the spices of Arabia, the riches of a great part of

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Despotism  
an effect of  
the con-  
quests of the  
Saracens.

(y) Maxims, Book I. Chap. i.

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Perfia, all Armenia, the provinces of Galatia, Bithynia, Phrygia, Lycia, Pamphylia, Palestine, Celosyria and Phenicia; Colchis and a great part of Georgia; the tributary provinces of Moldavia, Valachia, Romania, Bulgaria and Servia, and the best part of Hungary; all the extent of this vast empire concur to satisfy the appetites of the Grand Signior." Such was the fruit and final issue of the system of religion which originated from the impostor, and his immediate successors! Servitude and violence were the natural effects of the government erected by Mahomet, and the caliphs who succeeded him. As the Ottoman empire was founded in time of war, its laws and polity were arbitrary and severe, agreeable to the principles of military discipline. Warriors became sovereigns, and what was acquired by the sword naturally became the property of their generals or princes. The Grand Signior can dispose of lands, cattle, houses, nay, of every thing in the empire, except lands appropriated to sacred uses. He was styled God on Earth, the Shadow of God, Brother-of the Sun and Moon, and the Giver of all earthly Crowns. It is a maxim among the Turks, that the Grand Signior can never be deposed, or brought to an account for cruelty and oppression; while he destroys less than one thousand of his subjects in a day without a cause (z). Absolute

(z) Maxims, Chap. iii.

power implies passive obedience; and great industry is employed to instil submission into those, who are designed for great offices in the state. To die by the hand or even command of the prince, when the blow is submitted to with entire resignation, is taught in the seraglio to be the highest pitch of martyrdom, and he, who is so fortunate to suffer in this manner, is supposed to be immediately transported to Paradise (*a*). In consequence of this system of education, subjects readily obey the commands of the emperor; anticipate his wishes; and would not hesitate to fling themselves from a precipice, or kill each other, for his pleasure or entertainment. A Grand Vizier, who was a favourite of the Sultan, and applauded as a fortunate minister, confessed there was not any thing wanting to complete his honours, except dying by the hand of the Grand Signior (*b*). To support despotic power, the emperor employs none in high offices, but persons educated in the principles of Mahometanism, and passive obedience: children of Christian captives, unconnected in the state, whom he may raise without envy, and destroy without danger. Despotic power prevails in all places, where Mahometanism is planted, and is every where accompanied with subjection and servitude. "Every free and gallant people, whom it has involved in the progress

(*a*) Maxims, Chap. iii.

(*b*) Ibid. Chap. iv.

SECT. IV. of its power, says Mr. White, have abandoned their rights, the pride of independence, and security of freedom, as soon as they enlisted under the banner of the prophet (c).” A learned writer (d) asserts, that, in consequence of oppression and the doctrine of predestination, Egypt is less populous, and worse cultivated than formerly; that its inhabitants are reduced to a third of their former number; and that upwards of one third of the lands, cultivated in ancient times, is “metamorphosed into deserts, whose horrid aspect frights the traveller.” The husbandman neglects to improve his farm, from an uncertainty of transmitting it to his children; and the peasant is so loaded with arbitrary taxes, that he frequently wants absolute necessaries in the most fertile country on earth.

The Koran  
secures private  
property to individuals.

In consequence of despotism in the Ottoman empire, succession to property is not hereditary, but depends primarily on the will of the Soltan: but still individuals can secure their lands to their descendants, by annexing them to the church, as the prophet commanded. Any man, who wishes to transmit property safely to his male issue, settles the reversion on some religious foundation, during the life of that direct male issue; and annually pays a small quit-rent, until it is extinct; at which time the whole devolves to that foundation. The religious and political systems, being blended to-

(c) Sermon IX.

(d) Savary's 43d Letter on Egypt.

gether in the Koran, every subject, who observes <sup>SECT</sup>  
this law of the prophet, holds his possessions by <sup>IV.</sup>  
the same right, that the sovereign does his throne;  
nor has any prince ever attempted to dispossess the  
man, who complied with this law (e). Mahomet  
has not limited this law to those of his own sect,  
but equally extended it to Jews and Christians; so  
that the revenues of the church, we may suppose,  
are immense, and must in time possess almost all  
the land in the Ottoman empire. In Sir Paul Ri-  
caut's (f) time, it was computed that one third  
part of the lands of that great empire was destined  
and set apart for sacred uses. Their mosques are  
magnificent and richly endowed, and their emams,  
or priests, maintained in opulence and splendor.  
The Caliphs transferred the whole property of  
Christian churches to Mahometan ecclesiastics;  
appropriating none of the ancient possessions to  
private uses; but made considerable additions to  
former donations. The founders of that empire  
were priests, as well as princes, and the civil laws  
of Mahometans are founded upon the Koran, as  
those of the Jews are on the Pentateuch. The  
Koran was at first considered as a political, as well  
as religious code; but being found defective in its  
civil institutes, lawyers, without derogating from  
its authority, have supplied its defects by com-  
menting on the Koran, and explaining and ex-  
tending the ideas of the prophet.

(e) Guthrie's Geography.

(f) Maxima, Book II, Ch. vii.

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Ignorance  
an effect of  
Mahome-  
tanism.

But besides the mischiefs experienced by the vanquished, and the servitude entailed on them and their descendants; those conquests were, in one particular instance, peculiarly destructive to the literary world. The Caliph Omar, by burning the famous library at Alexandria, that great repository of eastern erudition, robbed mankind in some measure of the discoveries of the ancients, which might have served posterity as materials of literature, and rudiments of science. This Caliph maintained that, if those books agreed with the Koran, they were useless; if they differed from it, they were pernicious, and ought to be destroyed (g). In consequence of this loss of books, and the despotic power established by the Caliphs, Mahometans, especially the Turks, are remarkably ignorant, rarely improve their intellectual faculties, despise literature, and value themselves upon their ignorance of arts and sciences, as enervating the mind, and rendering them less fit for the occupation of arms. The Koran is a political, as well as religious code, and Mahomet, by forbidding his disciples to dispute about or question it, excluded all that learning, which is necessary in other countries, for the acquisition of religious and political knowledge. By those restraints on information and genius, this servile people have lost all desire of recovering knowledge; are become too

(g) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. I. folio, Book I. Ch. ii. Sect. 2.

indolent to exert their own talents, and too proud S E C T. IV.  
and perverse to adopt, or regard the discoveries  
of others ; while in countries, where the Christian  
religion is taught in its purity, we find its professors  
active, inquisitive and inventive, well acquainted  
with liberty and arts, and with the unalienable and  
immutable rights of mankind. A mind, accus-  
tomed to entertain sublime ideas of the attributes of  
the Deity, will be more apt to form exalted no-  
tions on other subjects, than the man, who fears  
to question the truth of contradictory passages in  
the Koran, and is obliged to assent to every thing  
in it, however absurd or ridiculous. It is ac-  
knowledgeed that the Koran represents the Deity  
in lively colours from the prophets and evange-  
lists ; but still the impostor often blends this subli-  
mity, with the impure rites and superstitions of  
the Arabs ; and sometimes makes this sublime Be-  
ing dispense with the laws of morality, and de-  
scend to the meanest employments, for the indul-  
gence of his favourite. So troublesome were Ma-  
homet's wives, and so importunate in their de-  
mands for fine cloaths, that, in order to satisfy  
them, he introduces the Almighty regulating his  
domestic concerns, and silencing their clamours.

Renaudot doubts the burning of the library at Mr. Gib-  
Alexandria ; and the historian of the Roman em- bon's idea of  
pire absolutely denies the fact, for the following the Alexan-  
drian library  
reasons. The testimony of Ab' pharagius, who examined.  
relates that disaster, and who wrote six hundred

SECT. IV. years after Omar, is overbalanced by the silence of Eutychius and Elmacin, both Christians, and natives of Egypt (*h*). But I cannot comprehend why Mr. Gibbon should oppose the silence of these men to the positive assertion of Abulpharagius, who wrote an history that does honour to his memory (*i*), and who was more unexceptionable in his character and testimony, than either of these annalists. The former of them, when patriarch of Alexandria, was hated by his people; and relates several things not to be found elsewhere, together with many lying and fabulous wonders (*k*). Hence the historian of the Roman empire might easily have perceived, why an author, accustomed to relate new and marvellous events, was likely to be silent about the well-known fact of the burning of the library. Elmacin, having filled a post of distinction and trust under Mahometan princes, must reasonably have been attached to their religion and government. He calls the impostor himself Mahomet of glorious memory, emperor of the faithful, and his followers the orthodox: so that, if not a Mahometan, he must have been a time-serving Christian, and unlikely to relate a fact disgraceful to Omar, one of the most

(*h*) Ch. li. p. 342. quarto.

(*i*) Bayle's Life of Abulpharagius.

(*k*) A New and General Biographical Dictionary, Art. Eutychius.

renowned of the Caliphs. "They, says Bayle (*l*), S E C T.  
IV. who consider the measures Elmacin was obliged to keep in his high office, will not think it strange, that he speaks honourably of the Caliphs; and never disrespectfully of the Mahometan religion." Another reason why Mr. Gibbon denies the burning of the library, is the inconsistency of such conduct with certain opinions of Mahometan casuists, who allow the faithful to read profane authors, and do not suffer the books of Jews or Christians to be burned, from a respect which they entertain for the name of God (*m*). But let me ask, whether these opinions were entertained in the time of Omar? and whether it is not absurd to suppose this Caliph to be acquainted with Mahometan casuistry, which did not prevail until after his time? Even this historian admits, that some casuists were, on other occasions, extremely illiberal; and condemned some Caliphs who were encouragers of learning. "Superstition, says he, was alarmed at the introduction even of abstract sciences; and the more rigid doctors of the law condemned the rash and pernicious curiosity of Almamon (*n*)."  
If such men had flourished in the time of Omar, we cannot doubt, but they would encourage him to, rather than restrain him from burning the library. Mr. Gibbon denies the bad effects which are supposed to have arisen from

(*l*) Life of Elmacin.

(*m*) Gibbon, Ch. li. p. 342.

(*n*) Ibid. Ch. lii. p. 431.

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that event ; since those classicks have been spared which Quintilian enumerates, and to which the suffrage of antiquity has adjudged the first place of genius and glory. “ The contempt of the Greeks for barbaric science, says he, would scarcely admit the Indian or Ethiopic books into the library of Alexandria ; nor is it proved, that philosophy has sustained any real loss from the exclusion of them (o).” But surely Quintilian does not pretend to enumerate all books of genius, judgment, or information, in the ancient world : he is silent about the works of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Indians and Phenicians, from whom the Greeks borrowed, though with many of their writings they must have been little acquainted. Is it probable that the Greeks, who were notorious plagiarists, would exclude from their libraries the writings of Barbarians, from whom they derived knowledge, while they affected to despise them ? If these writings were admitted and consumed by the flames, the loss of them to literature might be lamented, but cannot be ascertained.

Revenge,  
illiberality  
and extortion the effects of  
Mahometanism.

The Koran encourages revenge, and expressly enjoins retaliation of injuries ; “ We have ordained the talio, says Mahomet, a man for a man, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, a wound for a wound (p).” In another passage he thus expresses the same idea in general terms : “ offend them that offend you,

(o) Gibbon, Ch. lii. p. 344.

(p) Koran, Ch. v,

in the same manner that they shall have offended SECT. IV. you (q).” In consequence of those precepts, Turks are vindictive beyond expression; parents remind their children of any injury they have received, and excite them to revenge; so that this people seldom forget or forgive any injury which has been offered them (r). Here it is worthy of observation, that Mahomet built his law of retaliation, on a mistaken conception of the Mosaic code; the Hebrew lawgiver did not authorize individuals to pull out the eye, or tooth of those who injured them; but intended his law, as a direction to judges in the punishment of offences; while some Jews, and after them Mahomet and his followers, considered it as justifying individuals in avenging their own wrongs. The Koran has inspired its professors not only with a vindictive, but an unsocial spirit; and made it meritorious to destroy all, who disbelieve the prophet, as impious and profane. An hatred of other sects is the first idea impressed on the minds of Mahometans, and they manifest their aversion for Jews and Christians, by insulting them in their streets with the opprobrious titles of hogs and infidels (s). In consequence of the precepts of the Koran, and the practice of the first Caliphs, Turks consider all who

(q) Koran, Ch. ii.

(r) Observations on the Religion and Manners of Turks, Ch. i. *Dubl. duod.*

(s) Volney's Travels, Vol. II. Ch. xxxv.

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refuse to adopt their religion as persons whom they may lawfully rob, murder, and extirpate; nor could any thing preserve other sects from their fury and enthusiasm, except political considerations, which, in some degree, abate their inveterate prejudices (*t*). We read of a worthy Mussulman, who could not divest himself of an illiberal and vindictive spirit, even in the act of recounting his virtues. "These are all my virtues, says he, and by the practice of these, I doubt not of finding entrance into paradise, where the faithful shall set their feet on the necks of the enemies of our holy law, and enjoy all sorts of happiness (*u*)."

In Mahometan countries subject to the sultan, viceroys exercise all sorts of fraud and extortion on Christians, and never want evidences to justify them against their complaints. In Egypt the cadis are so partial in the distribution of justice, that it is scarcely possible for a Christian to gain a suit against a Mahometan; and the oaths of two Christians are reckoned but as one. If a Turk kill a Christian, he is only fined; while a Christian cannot even strike a Mussulman without risking his life (*w*). Mr. Gibbon (*x*) acquaints us, that "Christians, in two hundred years after Mahomet, were separated from their fellow-subjects by

(*t*) On Manners of Turks. *Dubl. duod.*

(*u*) Turkish Spy, Book II. Lett. x.

(*w*) Volney's Travels to Syria and Egypt, Vol. II. Ch. xxxv.

(*x*) Hist. Ch. li. p. 388.

a turban,

a turban or girdle of a less honourable colour; SECT. IV. instead of horses or mules they were condemned to ride on asses in the attitude of women. Their public and private buildings were measured by a diminutive standard; in the streets or baths it is their duty to give way or bow down before the meanest of the people, and their testimony is rejected, if it may tend to the prejudice of a true believer." The Mahometan code has operated powerfully on the private sentiments of its professors, and contracted the social affections within the narrow bounds of one religion or sect: while the Christian religion requires acts of loving-kindness, to all persons of whatever country or religion, whether friends or enemies; and has abated, if not abolished, national prejudices, formerly the source of enmity and dissension. We may appeal to experience, whether Christian nations, however they may differ in language, manners and national interest, do not observe the laws of courtesy and humanity, formerly unknown among different republics, and to which Mahometan countries at present are total strangers.

There is one doctrine of the Koran, which has been particularly destructive in those countries where it is professed. The prophet has told his followers, that God has numbered their days, and predestinated their fate; that every human event is irrevocably fixed; and not only the time, but even the manner and circumstances of man's death

Effects of  
the doctrine  
of predesti-  
nation.

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death so unalterably settled, that the devout Mus-  
fulman considers it criminal to attempt to alter  
what was preordained by God. In consequence  
of this maxim, Mahometans judge all precaution  
for saving life impious and vain; nor have they,  
until lately, been prevailed on in Constantinople,  
and other parts of the Ottoman empire, to em-  
ploy any remedy against the plague, which makes  
havoc in those countries. They make use of  
medicines, not for the purpose of protracting life,  
but allaying pain; consider the plague as the dart  
of the Almighty, who infallibly hits his mark;  
and thinks it sinful to attempt to escape it, by  
changing infected for salubrious air (*t*). The  
Egyptians will even wear the apparel of infected  
persons, without the smallest apprehension; and as  
familiarily attend the beds, and frequent the com-  
pany of pestilential persons, as we do the society  
of those who are gouty or rheumatic (*u*). We  
have the authority of Sir Paul Ricaut, that Con-  
stantinople would be depopulated by war and  
pestilence, if that city was not supplied with slaves  
annually imported thither from the Black Sea,  
and by incursions into Poland (*w*). Baron de  
Tott (*x*) assures us, that the plague at Constanti-  
nople is preserved and propagated by dealers in

(*t*) Smyth's Manners.  
Ch. viii.  
Tott's Memoirs, Part I.

(*u*) Ricaut's Maxims, Book II,  
(*w*) Ibid. Book I. Ch. xiv,

(*x*) De

old clothes, who even sell the furs of those who sect. IV. have died of that disease. The plague does mischief also in Cairo every year; and would be more fatal if its violence had not been allayed by cooling breezes, which blow regularly from the north in that city, at the summer solstice (y). Though experience tells predestinarians, that Christians, who fly from infection, survive, while whole cities of them are depopulated; yet so firmly fixed is the opinion of fate, that they will not quit the apartments of the sick; where, especially in the families of great men, many servants, the healthy and diseased, lie promiscuously in the same room, and perish together. Men are positively forbid to abandon the city or their houses, or to shun the conversation of infectious persons, where business invites them; but are advised to avoid contagious places, where they have no business to transact. Many men of sense shun the plague, and retire from infectious to wholesome air, not confiding in the prophet's maxim contrary to experience (z). Savary proves, that the plague is not a native of Egypt, but is imported into that country by the infected goods of Turkish merchants; and maintains, that a disease, which did little mischief in ancient Lacedæmon, Athens, and Byzantium, would be equally harmless in

(y) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. folio.  
Book II. Ch. viii.


(z) Ricaut,

those

SECT. those countries in modern times, was it not for  
 IV. the doctrine of fate, and the disregard of Mahometan governments to the health of their subjects. In consequence of these two causes, this malady sometimes sweeps away, at Cairo, three hundred thousand souls; and has lately destroyed two hundred thousand at Moscow, being propagated by pestiferous merchandize from the warehouses of the Jews (a). Bashaws derive great emolument in Egypt from the doctrine of predestination, and from the evils which attend it. The Grand Signior governs that country by bashaws or viceroys, who pay him an exorbitant rent, and are obliged to support the temple of Mecca, maintain a certain number of troops, and supply him with slaves, of which there are multitudes in Africa. As the office of bashaw generally lasts but one year, he exercises every kind of extortion to pay the sultan his rent, and enrich himself in that time; but derives his principal emolument from the plague, which annually sweeps away thousands. Every person being only tenant for life, and life itself precarious, when a man dies, his property reverts to the emperor or his viceroy, who sells it immediately, and has sometimes sold the same estate to three or four persons in the course of one week (b). The doctrine of unalterable fate inspires an indif-

(a) Savary, Letter 44, on Egypt.  
 Univ. Hist. Vol. VI. folio,

(b) Mod,

ference for all things, and renders its professors S E C T. IV. dull and inactive to an extraordinary degree. 

Men, who are persuaded that every thing is predetermined by God, naturally indulge in ease; and think it vain, nay, impious, to interpose. As this doctrine destroys free agency, it renders reason useless, discourages industry, and prevents men from exercising their talents to obstruct or remedy evils, which may threaten or befall them. The disciple of Mahomet beholds, with stupid unconcern, his parents, children, and friends, languish or expire; and his country desolated by pestilence, without exerting a single effort to check its baleful influence, and mitigate its rage. The Mahometan feels none of the pious resignation of a good Christian under sufferings, and receives benefits from God, without feeling, or expressing any emotion of gratitude. A Turk, having narrowly escaped destruction from the fall of an house, instead of returning thanks for his deliverance from impending ruin, cries out, that "the hour is not yet come, which God has preordained for his departure from this life (c)."

Let us consider the effects of Mahometan devotions on the state of individuals, and the welfare of society in Turkish countries. The prophet acquainted his followers, that God sent the Koran to the lowest heaven, on the month Ramadan;

Effects of Mahometan devotions on individuals and communities.

(c) Smyth's Manners,

and

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and that the angel Gabriel brought it down from thence, and delivered it to him chapter by chapter. In commemoration of this extraordinary event, the impostor ordered a fast on this month, which bears some resemblance to our Lent, but is more rigorously observed. The Mahometan fast consists in abstinence from meat, drink, and lying with their wives; and requires a constant attendance in places of worship, from sun rise to the end of evening twilight. Mussulmen reckon this month holy; and believe that, as long as it lasts, the gates of paradise are open, and those of hell shut. None are excused from fasting on this month, unless they are sick or on a journey, in which cases this fast is observed in another month (*d*). So great a veneration have Mahometans for their prophet, that every person, animal, or thing, which has any relation to him, are treated with the highest respect. Priests kiss the Koran, and bow to it; Mussulmen reverence the beast which carried it, and even the handkerchief that wiped off the sweat; nor is any person allowed to touch the Koran without washed hands and a clean napkin. Mahometans venerate every piece of paper; because, as some have imagined, the Koran is written on that substance; while others account for their veneration in a different manner. Busbequius affirms, that Turks respect

(*d*) Broughton, Art. Ramadan.

every piece of paper which comes in their way ; SECT.  
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as the name of God might be written upon it, and thrust it into some place where it cannot be trampled upon. They imagine, that when Mahomet shall summon his followers, on the day of judgment, into heaven, they must, in their way thither, walk over grates of hot iron barefooted ; and that these pieces of paper, which they saved from being trodden upon, shall then be put under their feet to preserve them from the torture of red-hot bars (*e*). The descendants of the impostor are exempted from legal prosecutions in courts of justice ; and in Cairo his shirt is preserved, and carried in procession on certain days, with great pomp and ceremony. Every person is required to visit the prophet's tomb at Mecca at least once in his life, except under particular circumstances. They who have performed this pilgrimage are confident they are absolved from all sin, and sure of being rewarded with the joys of paradise. Some pilgrims, at their return from the tomb, resolve on silence for three or four years ; while others put out their eyes, as if every thing else was beneath their regard after a sight so divine (*f*). The grand signior draws great part of his revenues from the tribute, paid by pilgrims going to Mecca ; and, as a mark of vene-

(*e*) Aug. Busbequii, Epist. I. p. 50.  
Life of Mahomet.

(*f*) Bayle's

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ration for the prophet, annually sends into Arabia 500 sequins, a Koran covered with gold, and as much black stuff as serves for a tent in the mosque at Mecca (*g*). When the new tent is erected, pilgrims tear the old to pieces, and each of them carries home a rag, which is considered as a precious relic, having been so long near to the bones of the prophet (*h*). The Koran requires this pilgrimage from all who are in a condition to make it; and declares, that they who decline it might as well die Jews or Christians as in the Mahometan religion (*i*). In consequence of this command, the pilgrimage to Mecca is reckoned so essential a branch of practical religion, that "the Mussulman must leave his friends, family and country, and expose himself to the perils of a long journey through barren sands, and beneath a burning sky, to visit the temple of Mecca and the tomb of the prophet (*k*)."

Such multitudes annually assemble at Mecca from different Mahometan countries, in honour of the prophet, that it is become a place of traffic; to which men carry the merchandize of their own country, and return home with the richest goods of Persia and the East Indies. Devotion has established a fair at Mecca; and caravans of forty thousand merchants and devotees

(*g*) Mod. Univ. Hist. Vol. I. folio, p. 355.

(*h*) Smyth's Manners.

(*i*) Broughton, Art. Ramadan.

(*k*) White, Serm. IX.

set out once a year from Cairo, Damascus, and S E C T. IV. other places, so as to meet on the way, and travel together unmolested to that city. Without such associations, no commerce could be carried on between countries so distant; nor could individuals, nor even small bodies of men, safely travel through barren deserts, where they were liable to be infested by Arabs, or destroyed by wild beasts (1).

From what has been delivered in this section, we may judge of the influence of the Mahometan institution in those countries in which it is professed. We have pointed out its principal bad effects, and may reduce them to the following heads; namely, a spirit of revenge, hatred of other sects, the despotism of rulers, the ignorance and servitude of subjects, the depopulation of countries by war and pestilence, and the inconveniences to individuals, and the public, from pilgrimages to Mecca. These evils are the natural offspring of the doctrines and practices of the preachers and professors of Mahometanism, and furnish a strong argument of the excellence of the Christian code, by the observance of whose precepts all those evils would vanish or disappear. If we may judge of the truth and divinity of any religious system, from the tendency and real effects of its doctrines, we must conclude that Mahome-

Effects of  
Mahometanism prove  
the excellent tendency of the  
gospel.

(1) *Mod. Univ. Hist.* Vol. VI. folio, Book XXI. Ch. iii.

SECT.  
IV.

and wise God, who never dictates what, upon the whole, is hostile to the temporal happiness of his creatures. We should not allow those doctrines to be of divine origin, which tend to the destruction of mankind, while they pretend to advance men's eternal welfare. Having pointed out the happy effects of christianity in numerous instances, we may, if we compare these effects with the evils that have arisen from Mahometanism, form a general opinion of the truth or falshood of those different systems of religion. Yet Mr. Gibbon approves the popular creed of Mahometans; "there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet;" and thinks it so rational, that a philosophic Theist might be induced to subscribe it (*m*). I admit, that a philosophic Theist would not hesitate to subscribe the former part of this creed relative to the unity of God; but surely a philosopher could not readily be convinced, that Mahomet was a prophet commissioned by that God. Even this philosophic historian and Theist, though partial to this creed, doubts whether Mahomet was an enthusiast or impostor; and intimates, that he was indebted for his Koran to his own researches, and not the assistance of Jews or Christians, since "the uniformity of a work denotes the hand of a single artist (*n*)."

(*m*) Hist. Ch. l. p. 205.  
quarto.

(*n*) Ch. l. p. 201, 202.

truth of this proposition, it necessarily follows, <sup>SECT.</sup>  
 that the Koran, which is a compound of hetero- <sup>IV.</sup>  
 geneous materials of truth and falsehood, of low  
 and sublime ideas, was not the work of one man.  
 This writer, who attributes uniformity to Maho-  
 metanism, admits, that in a version of the Koran,  
 “ the European infidel will peruse, with impati-  
 ence, the endless incoherent rhapsody of fable,  
 and precept, and declamation, which seldom ex-  
 cites a sentiment or an idea ; which sometimes  
 crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the  
 clouds (o).” Let me ask how the historian can  
 reconcile this incoherent rhapsody of fable, and  
 precept, and declamation, &c. with the unifor-  
 mity which he ascribed to the Mahometan system  
 a few pages before ?

(o) Ch. I. p. 209.

# F I N I S.

## E R R A T A.

- Page 151, line 1, add *he* after the word *and*.  
 Page 209, last line but one, *nine parts in ten*.  
 Page 215, line 7 from bottom, *Guinea* not *Guonia*.  
 Page 239, line 5 from bottom, read *encreasing* instead of  
*encrease*.  
 Page 281, line 11, read *declined* not *eclined*.  
 Page 318, line 6 from bottom, expunge the word *of*.



